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A Journal of Soviet and East European Studies

No. 68 July 1968

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International Commentary

STUDENTS AND REVOLUTION

Leopold Labedz

> *'The time is fast approaching when freedom, public peace, and social order will not be able to exist without education.'*
>
> *Alexis de Tocqueville* (1835)

TO say that the world is bewildered by the students' revolt is to state something embarrassingly obvious. What is not so obvious is the contention that the answer to the question: 'Why is it bewildered?' is more important than the answer to the question: 'Why do the students revolt?' This is not just because of the recent events in France, but because it is the wider context of this revolt which is of greater importance.

In a series of articles on the subject in *The Times* (27 May–1 June 1968), Richard Davy attributed the students' revolt to a 'distress over modern society', and drew the following conclusion:

> If you want to synthesize a student revolt in your laboratory proceed as follows. Take several thousand students of sociology and make them attend lectures in a hall that holds a hundred. Tell them that even if they pass their examinations there will probably be no jobs for them. Surround them with a society that does not practise what it preaches and is run by political parties that do not represent the students' ideas.
>
> Tell them to think about what is wrong with society and how to put it right. As soon as they become actively interested in the subject send in the police to beat them up. Then stand well clear of the bang and affect an attitude of confused surprise.
>
> This is, of course, a crude simplification, but it does at least hint at the pattern of some of the student trouble in the western world —a combination of educational grievances, political disillusion, moral concern, frustration, boredom, enthusiasm, and a certain amount of imitativeness.

The hint is suggestive, but not sufficient. 'A society that does not practise what it preaches' is too vague a description which, if taken literally, applies to all known societies in history, excepting possibly some small monastic groups. On the other hand, if the expression refers to the gap between the professed values and social practice, it is not necessarily wider in the countries witnessing student revolt than in others where it has not occurred.

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The most striking thing about it is the contradictory character of some of the reasons which have been advanced for its supposed general causes. It has been said that the students revolt because they are becoming cogs in the 'knowledge factories', cogs facing the anonymous 'multiversity' ('I'm only a number') in the big lecture halls of Berkeley University. But in Berlin they revolt, it has been suggested, because they want a wider *Gemeinschaft* than they have in small seminars. There is revolt at Columbia University as a result of the American 'permissive education'; there is revolt in Hamburg and Frankfurt because of the alleged authoritarian character of the German educational system. There is revolt in Naples and Turin because the Italian professors do not fulfil their teaching duties; indeed some of them do not, but this cannot be said about the German professors who were driven by the German students to resign. Students revolt in Paris and Rome where there is in fact scandalous overcrowding of lecture halls and libraries; they also revolt in New York and other American cities where there is no such overcrowding. In Columbia University they use the issue of the building of a new gymnasium, which might have been taken as an act of racial segregation against Harlem Negroes; at Northwestern University the Negro students forced the authorities to provide them with segregated housing on racist lines. There is revolt in California against the affluent society and the prospect of living, like their philistine fathers, in the 'ticky-tacky houses' of the Pete Seeger song; in Paris though, there is revolt against bad housing conditions. In Tokyo there is revolt because after competitive entrance examinations students find themselves available for politics, with a degree virtually guaranteed because of the traditionally easy grading in the Japanese universities; yet in Paris, we are told, there is revolt because of the examination neurosis induced by the harshness of the French examination system. There is revolt in Rome, where life is exciting and Italian students are easily excitable; but there is also revolt in Stockholm, where life is boring and the students are cold-blooded Scandinavians. In Paris the middle-class university rebels say that more students of working-class origin should be admitted, and the same is said in Belgrade, where such students form a more sizable part of the university. But the Paris revolt started with a protest against the non-admittance of male students to the girl students' quarters in Nanterre and the Belgrade revolt with a protest against the system of distribution of tickets to a pop show which gave high priority to industrial and farm workers. The students at the London School of Economics staged a sit-down to win participation in the running of the university, and the same is demanded by students at the Universities of Leeds and Essex, not to mention the French students and their demands for *cogestion*. But the students also revolt in Santiago where they do have a system of *cogobierno* in the university and in Berlin where they have had their *Mitbestimmung* from the very beginning of the Free University. Last but not least, there is the contrast

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between the prevalent ideological posture of the students in the communist and Western countries. In Warsaw and Prague they demand political freedom, in Paris, Rome, and Berlin they invoke Ho, Mao, and Marcuse.

IN short, the only common feature of the students' revolt is their rebellious mood, and its historical originality is that it appeared in the highly industrialized countries. Neither its practice nor its 'theory' are coherent enough to be seen as an attempt to seek rational goals by rational means. Rather, we are faced here with all kinds of ideological rationalizations of emotional drives which are contradictory. For such complexes, genuine problems of social and educational change can provide stimuli or justification, but they are only instrumental in providing outlets for other motives, as can be seen from the fact that such students' demands which are fulfilled are immediately followed by another set of demands. This is not just a matter of revolutionary tactics. It is a classical pattern of all movements which manifest political 'transference neuroses'. In such movements realizable goals are irrelevant, and Utopia (i.e. fantasy) is the only satisfactory symbol. This is the emotional background behind the current ideological hotch-potch in which the 'one-dimensional pessimism' of Marcuse is combined with the 'revolutionary optimism' of Mao. It is a mixture in which, ironically, élitist philosophy and dictatorial practice are supposed to serve as a guide to a participatory democracy in a permissive society.

This is not to suggest that the problems which the students' movement reflects are often not genuine, and sometimes even serious. It is only to point out that the 'philosophy' with which they confront them is jejune and confused. Many of the postures and fads displayed in them look like a parody of similar manifestations in the past, in a situation which is very different, and the young actors seem insufficiently aware of this. If some of them were more concerned with the extension of their historical knowledge, they could not but have the feeling of *déjà vu*.

There is, for instance, nothing new in the bohemian attitude to sex, except that it has now become an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon, after the belated discovery that Queen Victoria is dead. As long ago as 1832 Barthelemy Prosper Enfantin created a commune in Menilmontant based on the theory of sexual permissiveness (and it led to a split amongst the Saint-Simonists). Since then, there have been the views of Engels, the 'glass of water' theory of Alexandra Kollontai, and finally the advent of the Pill. What we are witnessing now, however, is not just the changing pattern of sexual mores, but also an extraordinary ideological confusion accompanying it. At one and the same time there is the use of the slogan 'Make Love not War' and the acceptance of Mao's thought that 'political power grows out of the barrel of a gun'. The

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sympathy for the Chinese 'cultural revolution' is not seen as incompatible with the fact that Mao does not endorse sexual permissiveness, but discourages love as a bourgeois indulgence, and (for good demographic reasons) prohibits early marriage among the Red Guards.

There is certainly nothing new in the attitude to power among the politically-minded revolutionary students. They see themselves as the vanguard of total change.[1] Their attitude is reminiscent of Bakunin's idea that pan-destruction is constructive; pure secular chiliasm, unsullied by secular experience, is manifested in the constant reiteration that it is necessary to destroy totally 'the dominant system', and that no partial changes, smacking of reformism, can be envisaged. As to the alternative arrangements which are to replace the present ones, history and sociology might just as well not exist for many of the students of these subjects. Apart from some nebulous ideas about 'workers' control' (which hardly dovetail with Marcuse's idea that the working class has been increasingly integrated into the capitalist system), there are no indications about the political, social, and economic organization which is to issue from the 'total change'.[2] As Marcuse said last year at the Free University of Berlin: 'For the moment the concrete alternative is still only the negation.'

WITH his conceptual categories divorced from empirical questions in a special type of *a priori* analysis, Marcuse seems to be the latest product of what Marx called 'the decomposition of the Hegelian philosophy'. He has been emerging as a caricature of the Young Hegelians, whom Marx, concerned as he was with 'empirical history', ridiculed in *The German Ideology* and criticized for using 'speculative-idealistic, i.e. fantastic terms'. *One-Dimensional Man* is closer in spirit to Max Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (1845) than to Marx's critique of 'Saint Max', and that is why it appeals to the present, anarchistic type of rebelliousness. In his book, *Szkice o ideologiach* (Instytut Literacki, Paris, 1967), Alexander Hertz noted that Stirner wrote in an atmosphere of German romanticism, when it was

[1] One of the student leaders in France made the following, not untypical, point: 'Soviet society has not accomplished a real mutation in comparison with the bourgeois societies. The communist Soviet man is not in fact fundamentally different. The idea of a total man which was the point of departure of Marxism has not been realized. It has been more or less tried, more in China than in the Soviet Union; it has been tried in Cuba. But the experience has been a failure from the point of view of civilization. It is necessary to make a cultural revolution, a sexual revolution. We do not want only "to change the world", but also "to transform life".' (*Magazine Litteraire*, Paris, May 1968.)

[2] 'What they all want is the world of free men' (*Magazine Litteraire*, May 1968)—such was the romantic notion about the French students' revolt. Yet Daniel Cohn-Bendit proposed only two 'concrete demands': 'We demand the suppression of the university canteens. They should become canteens for youth, where all the young people could eat at 1.40 francs' (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, 20 May 1968). 'The resources of a technological society are vast. I can't see why only a few people should go to the Café Royale for coffee. It should be for everybody. . . .' (*The Sunday Times*, 16 June 1968.)

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stirred by the revolutionary dreams before 1848. He was as repelled by his time as Marcuse is by the present one; but his is a case of cultural, not yet of technological alienation. Unlike Marcuse, he is, intellectually, profoundly anti-ideological, rejecting all *Begriffe* (abstractions, general ideas, and cultural values) of which, according to him, the unique individual is but a slave. However, *emotionally* Stirner is profoundly ideological, displaying all the familiar traits of the bohemian intelligentsia which wants 'the privilege of the whore: power without responsibility', permissiveness without order, privileges without duties. His is the most extreme case of the philosophy of the *Id*, which should be totally unconstrained. Writing long before Freud, Stirner is of course not aware of the subconscious dimension, but like Rousseau, from whom he stems, he wants a man unsullied by civilization. Like Rousseau's 'noble savage', his *Einzige* is itself an abstract a-historical construct devoid of any concrete sociological characteristics which connect man with society and culture.

Stirner wrote in *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*: 'A people cannot be free otherwise than at the individual's expense.' Marcuse expressed a similar idea in Freudian terms in the *One-Dimensional Man*: 'The greater liberty involves a contradiction rather than extension and development of instinctual needs. . . .' This refers to 'advanced industrial society', but in fact comes close to a rejection of civilization as such (which in Freudian schemes is always based on some sort of sexual repression). Similarly, Stirner's critique is concerned not with any particular form of society, but with society as such, which for him means inevitable constraints. He rejects all of them in his quest for the absolute freedom of a solipsistic individual. Marcuse does not go so far. But he engages in an equally absolutist critique of 'institutional desublimation' in the 'advanced industrial society'. He calls for 'a new anthropology, not only as a theory, but [as] a form of existence'. Is it not an anthropology which would express in Reichian terms Rousseau's idea of a 'noble savage'? [3]

IT is not surprising that those who want to return to Arcadia or to Utopia are afraid of 'empirical history' as the devil is of holy water. But what about their libertarianism? It appears very shallow in spite of all the indignation against the 'organization man', the despotic bureaucracy, the 'over-developed society'.[4]

[3] Marcuse's earlier book, *Soviet Marxism* (1958), is for a self-declared follower of Marx a most un-Marxian study: the topic is discussed historically *in vacuo*, and the author would have done well to sit for a while in the British Museum to acquire a necessary minimum of knowledge on the subject.

[4] Marcuse argues that one should be tolerant towards the Left, but intolerant towards the Right. Daniel Cohn-Bendit said: 'We demand freedom of expression inside the faculty, but we refuse it to the pro-Americans' (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, 8 May 1968). Five hundred students of Rome University refused to take part in an examination, in which they were asked to translate from Latin some of the 'thoughts of Chairman Mao'. They considered the choice 'provocative' and

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Bakunin rejected Marx's authoritarianism, but was himself an authoritarian. Daniel Cohn-Bendit or Alan Geismar sound more like Bakunin than Prince Kropotkin, and the same applies to some of the German student leaders. Among their followers there is no doubt a certain libertarian potential, but a sceptical observer cannot fail to notice the ambiguous elements of manipulation in the student movement. In the past, those who propagated the necessity of violence as a 'midwife of history' did not call their organizations 'non-violent co-ordinating committees'; and while itching for the cobble-stones, if not for the purifying fire, they would not cover revolutionary impulse with the fig-leaf of pacifist intentions. It may be good revolutionary tactics nowadays, but it is hardly *authenticité*.

Hypocrisy is no less striking if Tartuffe appears to be young, especially when the argument is against the insincerity of the older generation. The dilemma of ends and means catches up with the revolutionaries [5] even when they are too young to realize it, and too ill-informed to understand the lessons of Nechaev. Their libertarianism is suspect not only because of their choice of some very non-libertarian political heroes as symbols of their hopes. There is also the associated concomitant condemnation of 'repressive tolerance' in the West and the idealization of the revolutionary intolerance in China, North Vietnam, or Cuba, as well as the evident lack of sympathy for the students in the communist countries among many of the Western adherents of the students' New Left. The more revolutionary among them condemn them outright as 'reactionary'; others express solidarity only very grudgingly, or not at all. Only the Belgrade and Prague students protested against the police maltreatment of the Warsaw students; in the West, apart from the Trotskyites and some Berlin students, there were no similar declarations of support for them.[6] During more than a decade of the existence of the revolutionary New Left publications, they

demanded the abolition of Latin. The text ran: 'Omnes questiones non possunt valide perstringi, nisi ratione inquirendi adhibita (All questions can only be resolved by methods of discussion) . . .' (*Corriere della Sera*, 14 May 1968).

[5] *Time* magazine (7 June 1968) quoted a Columbia student: 'How can you use your ends to justify your means? Well, as my philosophy teacher used to say, what else can you possibly use to justify your means? There is nothing else!'

[6] In the discussion programme, *Students in Revolt*, shown by BBC television, Daniel Cohn-Bendit objected to the word 'liberalization' used in respect of Czechoslovak developments, but in an interview given to *Magazine Litteraire* (May 1968) he said: 'In Prague, the liberalization took place because the Czechoslovak economy was completely dead. The liberalization took place there because there is a revival of the "capitalist basis".'

There is a proper political 'free for all' here: Cohn-Bendit, who declared himself an 'anti-Trotskyite', criticized the cult of Mao and called the French communists 'les crapules staliniennes'. Yuri Zhukov called him in *Pravda* (30 May 1968) a 'werewolf' and a CIA agent. When the Yugoslav student, Dragana Stavijel, praised Tito on the same BBC programme, she was later criticized by Cohn-Bendit and branded by Tariq Ali as a 'Titoist stooge'. The Yugoslav demonstrators were first praised in the Chinese press and later supported by Tito, who, according to the Chinese, 'smeared the students' struggle' (*Peking Review*, 14 June 1968).

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have shown a marked disregard for the fate of the young east European 'revisionists'.

Why should this be so? After all, in the beginning the New Left stressed that one of the factors in its emergence was disillusionment with Stalinism after Hungary 1956. After that, the evolution in eastern Europe and the evolution of the New Left have been divergent. Since the Hungarian revolution there have been many other cases of repression in eastern Europe calling for similar condemnation, but the New Left remained indifferent.[7] Its evolution was obviously dictated by the psychological need of its adherents for Utopia. It was no longer possible to locate it in the Soviet Union, as their ancestors were doing in the thirties, so substitutes had to be found elsewhere. Revolutionary romanticism in search of a love-object had now a variety of choices in the polycentric communist world, but clearly some of them could better fulfil the role than others. Cuba is obviously at the head of the messianic queue (and Che Guevara the best symbol for revolutionary romanticism). On the other hand, the Soviet Union and the countries of eastern Europe no longer qualify. After all that is known about their Stalinist past and their bureaucratic present, it is difficult to go on believing that they embody Utopia-in-the-making, that they correspond to the romantic notion expressed half a century ago by Lincoln Steffens: 'I saw the future and it works.' The old faithful may still stick to it, but the New Romantics are quite unconcerned whether it works or not. They cannot see it as *the* future. The glamour which 'the fatherland of the proletariat' had for their ancestors is gone. They had to move to new pastures—from the revolution of rising expectations to the expectation of rising revolutions.

It is thus not at all surprising that those who are now longing for Utopia turn away from those who had a long experience of living with it. They feel uncomfortable when faced with the historical evidence which may adduce a sceptical corrective to their messianic fervour and deflate their ideological perspective. Conversely, it is only natural that those who had the experience of how Utopia works in practice (e.g. the Polish or Czech students) are aware of the yawning chasm between the ideological abstractions and the personal lessons of their daily life, and regard those who still approach secular political problems in the chiliastic perspective as politically infantile (see p. 79). For them such an attitude can only be another illustration of Santayana's dictum that those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat it. For them 'repressive tolerance' would be an improvement on the intolerant repression which they are facing. The 'consumer society' would be a preferable progressive alternative to the shortage of goods. Even a slow change in the right direction would be acceptable (see pp. 99–100 and

[7] 'They simultaneously refused to identify with the Soviet Union or to be greatly concerned about injustice in any of the communist societies.' (Paul Jacobs & Saul Landau, *The New Radicals*, 1966, p. 12.)

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114–115), although they have infinitely more reason than those who demand 'total change' in the West to talk about 'the system', 'the military-industrial complex', and 'the structures of power' (which in their case are based on the Party's monopoly and not on political pluralism). They are concerned with their own countries, rather than a projection of their hopes on revolutions elsewhere. (Occasionally a self-critical insight breaks through in the West. Here is the recent reaction of one New Left sympathizer to his meetings with Czechoslovak students. Writing in the *New Statesman* (21 June 1968), David Caute reflected: '... these observations, both now and at the time, reveal to me a certain perversity in my own attitude. Nostalgia for student riots, clashes with the police, and totally exposed thighs suggests a false romanticism, an irritable desire to inflict on an ostensibly sane society a form of chaos which, as a way of life, is superficial and nihilistic. The manner in which the young Czechs are conducting themselves is really a model of civic control and enlightenment, whereas we have become alcoholic on sensation and violence.')

FEW generalizations about student revolutions apply to the majority of students. It has often been pointed out that radical attitudes, particularly in their political form, are not representative of the student body as a whole, and reflect only the position of an 'activist' minority.[8] However, such small but organized minorities have demonstrated their ability 'to set student populations in motion and to define the issues'.[9] After the French 'student revolution' the question is not only how much revolutionary potential can be tapped by them in the student body, but in the population as a whole.

Obviously the situation is different in different countries and it would be quite wrong to generalize. Consider the conclusion drawn by Edgar Morin in *Le Monde* (5–6 June 1968):

> It has happened for the first time in the Western society of the twentieth century, economically developed and politically liberal, that a specifically student and youth movement has triggered off a vast movement throughout all society. This permits a forecast of the role which can be played in future by (a) the youth as a force of disruption, rebellion, and innovation . . . in modern society; (b) the University, grown to a point where it will soon comprise half of the juvenile population and will find itself, as Alain Touraine has indicated, at the very centre of social problems; (c) the intelligentsia which reacts more and more virulently on the

[8] Cf. Seymour Martin Lipset, *Student Politics* (1967).

[9] Ibid. pp. 199–201. Cf. also Frank A. Pinner, 'Tradition and Transgression' in a special issue of *Daedalus* (Winter 1968) on 'Students and Politics', pp. 139 and 151. An academic observer in sympathy with 'the Movement' argued that it is basically irrelevant 'to point out that the alienated activists of the New Left [in the United States] represent only a few thousand people on all the campuses combined [out of 6,000,000 students]. What is relevant is that in some inchoate manner they articulated what many others felt.' (*Dissent*, May–June 1968.)

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> one hand against the techno-bureaucratic organization to which it is partially chained, and on the other against the bourgeois life itself. The motive force of future changes seems therefore to be in the alliance of the intelligentsia and of the youth in the vast university concentrations.

For the revolutionary romantics the working class ceased to be a chosen class. When they noticed that it was not fulfilling the task 'given to it by history', they began to look elsewhere.[10] Both the prophets of the New Left—the neo-populist C. Wright Mills and the paleo-Hegelian Marcuse—located the new revolutionary syndrome in the intelligentsia and among 'the popular masses' of the underdeveloped countries. However, when the intelligentsia in the industrial countries began showing the symptoms of 'alienation', the youth and students in the industrial countries became the centre of attention. Some even argue that in the United States

> 'the new, potentially revolutionary, exploited class is no longer the working class as a whole', but that the young 'form the new proletariat, are undergoing impoverishment, and can become the new revolutionary class. . . . As happens when a class is exploited, young people are beginning to become aware of their exploitation. Many have taken the the essential step to consciousness, the rejection of the present system, and are available to develop a consciousness of themselves as a class.'[11]

The gap between generations, which is now so acute, has been the subject of many reflections and comments which help to explain its existence, but not its present form. It has often been pointed out that youth tends to be idealistic; that it wants to assert its identity; and that

[10] Among the old hands, Paul Sweezy diagnosed 'the degeneration of a Western working class' which led it 'into open collaboration with the bourgeoisie' as a result of its 'natural tendency' towards reformism (*National Guardian*, 16 September 1967).

[11] John and Margaret Rowntree, 'Youth as a Class', *International Socialist Journal*, February 1968. The authors criticize Marcuse and argue that their analysis 'does not depend on the development of a disembodied anti-consumer consciousness on the part of the youth, but instead finds a real revolutionary potential in the youth arising out of their role in production'. Thus Marxist method is used to prove that class war between the workers and the capitalists has been replaced by the class war between the young and the capitalist system. No attempt is made to explain the ferment of youth in the communist countries by this original application of the method of analysis based on economic determinism. In *Pravda* (30 May 1968), Yuri Zhukov violently attacked Marcuse, suggesting that he had been 'catapulted from far-away San Diego to Paris' in order 'to sow confusion' and 'to oppose the youth, and the students in particular, to the fundamental forces of the working class'. A more sophisticated critique of Marcuse appeared in the Polish *Trybuna Ludu* (9 June 1968). The pro-Chinese *La Voix du Peuple* (31 May 1968) declared that it is necessary to dispel 'confusionism': 'The student community does not constitute a social class.' The pro-Chinese *Progressive Labour* (June 1968) added sternly: 'The students in Eastern Europe are being used by the reactionary ruling cliques to move to the right and unite with US imperialism. . . . Students in Poland . . . can hardly be considered in the vanguard of anything but reaction.'

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its sexual drives are stronger and more easily sublimated through abstract identifications. Yet if students' libidos tend to be unanchored this may account for similarities in their behaviour over time, but not for its variations. It has also been stressed [12] that as the young now experience the world in the shadow of a possible nuclear catastrophe, history has become contingent for them, and therefore ideological certainties and historical necessities of the old systems are no longer relevant or appealing. Although this applies to all who entered the nuclear age, it can be argued that the older generation is incapable of transcending its set mental habits, while youth is more sensitive to the new aspects of the historical situation. Yet, what we have witnessed is not the rise of a sceptical generation, but of a romantic one, a situation in which 'cynical idealists' are elevating, as has been said, 'the ill-digested compound of primitive Marxism, Anarchism, Maoism, etc., to the dignity of a philosophy', in which ideological certainties and historical necessities are once again replacing thought. A new fascination with violence is thus introduced into the combustion chamber of the nuclear age.[13] *Furor ideologicus* has been given a new lease of life. After 'race' comes 'youth', after Fanon—Marcuse. It has been pointed out triumphantly that 'the bankruptcy of the "end of ideology" school has been amply demonstrated by recent history'. There is little doubt that at present the *Zeitgeist* shows a resuscitation of the ideological temper.

WHEN Daniel Bell wrote that at the end of the fifties, 'in the West, among the intellectuals, the old passions are spent'—that for the radical intellectual who articulated the revolutionary impulses of the past century and a half the two decades between 1930 and 1950, with their tragedies and horrors, 'meant the end to chiliastic hopes, to milleniarism, to apocalyptic thinking—and to ideology'—this was true of the majority of the intellectuals formed politically during these decades. With the emergence on the scene of new generations for whom the lessons of these decades were not based on experience, but were at best an intellectual exercise and at worst an unknown or irrelevant past, the chiliastic impulse began to revive. A belief that it was dead for good, that after 'the tragic self-immolation of a revolutionary generation that

[12] D. G. MacRae, *Ideology and Society* (1961).

[13] One example among many of this attitude is given by a sympathetic observer of the French student movement in *Magazine Litteraire* (May 1968), who wrote about 'our society which makes the exclusion of all violence the alpha and omega of all its political mini-ideas'. He contrasted this with the attitude of the students 'who have discovered that one should not obtusely oppose violence and dialogue, that violence is a condition of the introduction of all true dialogue. The right to the word is won on the field of battle'. Raymond Aron quoted in *Figaro* (14 June 1968) an article by a young university lecturer in the revolutionary paper *L'Arc*: 'The philosophy of tomorrow will be the philosophy of terror . . . linked up with the practice of political terror.' Both Marcuse and Dutschke quoted Rousseau on the necessity for making slaves conscious of their slavery and forcing people to be free.

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had proclaimed the finer ideals of man, [after a] destructive war of a breadth and scale hitherto unknown, [after] the bureaucratized murder of millions in concentration camps and death chambers', the West would become immunized to the ideological bacilli, was a rationalist fallacy. Daniel Bell pointed out that 'for the radical intelligentsia, the old ideologies have lost their "truth" and their power to persuade', but he disregarded his own dictum that 'what gives ideology its force is passion'. Like eighteenth-century rationalists he overestimated the temporary effectiveness of reason and overlooked the future force of passion. The chiliastic urge has proved so enduring in the history of humanity that it was unlikely that it would disappear for good. In his time, Weber thought that there inevitably would be 'rationalization' of society because of 'routinization of charisma' and functional bureaucratic necessities. In a similar spirit it was assumed that the memory of Hitler and Stalin would have made a more lasting impact and the rationality would permanently extinguish chiliastic attitudes in the West.

There is, to be sure, a new factor. The nuclear facts of life may ultimately confront humanity with the stark alternative of an end of ideology or an end of history. 'The end of ideology' school was quite right in being critical of ideological passions, of the fanaticism which was ready to sacrifice the present for the alleged happiness of future generations. Daniel Bell was right in stressing with Jefferson that 'the present belongs to the living', and with Herzen that 'each age, each generation, each life has its own fullness'. Raymond Aron was right in saying that 'ideological dogmatism must disappear for ideas to become alive again'.

But if 'the end of ideology' was and is a good prescription, it is not a good description. Ideological passions have begun to flourish in the West again, and it is the students, the one category of the population which is supposed to learn critical thought, who display the old ideological dogmatism and are moved by new mental sterotypes. In an age of television and mass communications *idées reçues* are received instantly.

IT would, of course, be quite wrong to overlook the legitimacy of many of the students' grievances. Many of them are not only justified but are of general importance. Complaints about authoritarianism, bureaucratization of institutions, helplessness of the individual in the face of big organizations, commercialization of values in the West—in short all that is drawing attention to the negative aspects of 'the quality of life' in industrial societies—is intrinsically valuable and commands sympathy. If noble libertarian professions of faith on the part of the students against the stifling of the human spirit by the bureaucratic and technocratic structures in the advanced industrial society were sufficient to bring us, through the use of ideological generalities and the violence of militance, one inch nearer to the overcoming of the problems and dilemmas inherent in modern technical-scientific

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civilization, there would indeed be greater sympathy with student protest.

It is, of course, arguable that such protests are an early alarm bell against the social sclerosis which prevents the adaptation of human institutions to the consequences of technological change. There may be something in this, but, intellectually, 'the Movement' has not produced a single idea of how to cope with the present problems of social change, and what kind of institutions are to replace the existing ones. When faced directly with this question student leaders fall back upon the age-old ideological clichés. There is always that old Utopian escape hatch that they do not want to produce a blueprint for the new society, but that it will emerge in the fire of the struggle.[14] This was the psychological mechanism which permitted Marx to preserve some of the Utopian ideas in the nineteenth century (such as the anarchist idea of the withering away of the state), but his was, after all, a serious analysis of the society of his time. Reading the publications of 'the Movement' today and listening to student leaders makes one realize that they are not the reformers of the coming 'technetronic' society. They look more like its Luddites.[15]

[14] As Tariq Ali said on the BBC television programme: 'It would be incorrect of us to lay down dogmatic rules or lay down even a dogmatic blueprint of the society which is going to emerge. We feel that such a society will evolve through the process of struggle itself. We know we are opposed to this society, we know roughly that we are in favour of socialization, we are in favour of workers' control, we are—most of us are in fact libertarian Marxists, we believe in "all power to the Soviets". We believe that that slogan is not dated at all, that it has not been properly applied. We believe in the abolition of money, we believe in the appropriation of all private property.' (*Newsweek*, 24 June 1968.)

[15] George Lukacs wrote in his recent book, *Conversazioni* (De Donato, Bari, 1967): 'If we say that manipulation [of the people] is a consequence of technological development, then we have to become (in the manner of Marcuse, Adorno, and Horkheimer) a breed of Luddites, struggling against technological development.' Lukacs touched here on what for a Marxist is the crux of the matter. Marx started as a romantic, but after his 'Young Hegelian' phase, he made the problem of production the cornerstone of his theory.

Professor Adam Ulam argued, in his *Unfinished Revolution*, that when it was adopted in Russia, Marxism was transformed into Leninism, because the natural reaction to industrialization in underdeveloped countries is radical populism or anarchism (the earliest and the most extreme reaction to industrialization was, of course, Luddism). The populist attitude of the intelligentsia has often been explained in terms of the discrepancy between their cultural and national aspirations and the economic backwardness of their countries. Now, for the first time, a radical populism has emerged in the industrial countries, claiming Marx as its patron, but hankering after the romantic attitudes which are pre-Marxian and anti-industrial. History has made a full circle. The scientific-technological revolution of late industrialism has produced its own Luddites, who, unlike the earlier ones, do not smash machines, but some of whom want to withdraw from society (and presumably live eventually on the surplus produced by the computerized economy). They will then be like the Roman proletariat, which, according to Sismondi, was parasitic on the state. Marxist theoreticians have reached a point where they either have to give up the romantic-Utopian ingredients of Marx's early thought, or his later 'productivist' approach to social analysis and history. Paleo-Hegelian neo-Marxists, like Marcuse and his followers, should logically give up Marx altogether and go back to Arcadia.

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It would also be a doubtful idea to look at the student revolt as an example of the Hegelian 'cunning of reason', a mystical concept which resulted from the grafting of nineteenth-century optimistic and teleological views of history onto eighteenth-century rationalism. The students' revolt is not going to cure whatever malaise may exist in some contemporary Western societies. Its elderly ideologists are, in Herzen's phrase, 'not the doctors, they are the disease'. They express the present-day crisis of rationality, and represent the return to the Messianic hopes of earlier ages.

Nor is it possible to apply Sorel's idea about great myths 'which enclose with them all the strongest inclinations of a people, of a party, or of a class, inclinations which recur to the mind with the insistence of instincts in all the circumstances of life; and which give an aspect of complete reality to the hopes of immediate action by which, more easily than by any other method, men can reform their desires, passions, and mental activity'. In *Reflections sur la Violence* (1908) Sorel referred to early Christianity, the Reformation, and the French Revolution as examples of such myths which brought about a profound transformation (although the Utopian aspirations contained in them did not, of course, come to pass). 'The myth must be judged as a means of acting on the present; any attempt to discuss how far it can be taken literally as future history is devoid of sense.' Is the idea of 'student power' such a myth, a substitute for Sorel's own myth of a 'general strike'? It is enough to ask this question (or listen to Mr Tariq Ali or M. Cohn-Bendit) to have no doubts about the answer.

But is not the French 'student revolution' of May 1968 a *prima facie* case that 'student power' can indeed move mountains and that as such it falls within the Sorelian analysis? After all, the very thing which Sorel had envisaged has in fact happened, namely, the general strike. Yet the lessons of May 1968 in France may be diametrically opposite to the hopes of the students. What has been demonstrated is not only that the French Communist Party refused to take the plunge in a revolutionary situation and to make a bid for power,[16] but that in this situation the aspirations of the French working class remained within the established social (though not political) order. It would have been very surprising indeed if the Marcusian anti-consumptionist ideology had much appeal to the workers, just as the revolt against the affluent society has little appeal in the economically underdeveloped countries. A temporary fusion of the resentment of the *Raznochintsy* of the scientific age, the mass of the new students who still look on the universities as stepping-stones to the *élite*, with the old frustrations of the French working class, can easily conceal the basic differences between the two categories. In all the industrial countries, technological development led to university expansion, creating a mass of new

[16] And if it did, what would have happened to the Trotskyite, Maoist, and anarchist students?

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students who retained however the old, *élite* aspirations. Education became the most important avenue of social mobility, hence not only the new character of the universities, but also their new role in the battle for status. Inevitably, the changing function of the university in industrial society generated new problems and tensions. These were seized upon by the New Left, which groping for good causes stumbled upon the question of university reform. It proved to be a 'winner' with the students and some professors, but it had no immediate appeal outside the universities. In France, the working class has for a long time now faced the painful problem of its integration into the French 'bourgeois' society. Hence the strength of the revolutionary anarcho-syndicalist tradition in France. This accounts for the temporary fusion between the students and the workers, but their different aspirations are quite obvious. Paradoxically, the outcome of the crisis may undermine this revolutionary anarcho-syndicalist tradition and diminish the chances of the student-worker alliance in future. In Germany, Great Britain, and the USA it is not likely in any case. In France it was also easily predictable that whoever emerged as the ultimate political victor, de Gaulle, the politicians, or the French Communist Party, the students were bound to be the political losers who, sooner or later, would cry 'treason'.[17] Ironically, by focusing attention on university reform and on the problems of the social gap between the workers and the 'bourgeoisie', they may have contributed to the eventual modernization of the 'structures' which they despise, and to the undermining of the possibilities of a future revolutionary action against them.

POLITICAL behaviour cannot be explained simply in social terms (status envy) or as being due to economic factors only (lack of occupational prospects or the 'over-production of the intelligentsia'). History and local cultural and political traditions also play an important role. In France the myth of the Revolution is still strong, and its rhetoric so pervasive that the population as a whole begins to act their parts when the occasion arises. The extent of this historical Pavlovian conditioning is quite extraordinary. In May 1968, France was not only undergoing a revolutionary conflict, it was re-living previous ones. The past was almost as much a referential point as the present: 1789, 1830, 1848, 1851, 1871, 1936. The roles were distributed and it was somewhat difficult to distinguish between the real actions for real motives and the play-acting. The language used put the problems of a technological age on the Procrustean bed of French revolutionary rhetoric.[18] Edgar Morin wrote about the students occupying the Sorbonne as the storming of 'the university Bastille' (*Le Monde*,

[17] Cf. Alfred Kastler, 'Comment les étudiants ont été trahis . . .' (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, 19 June 1968).

[18] 'Events here during the past two or three weeks have emphasized the extent to which the minds of educated Frenchmen, whatever their political views, are imbued with the atmosphere and concepts of Paris nearly two centuries ago. They

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5 June 1968); it seems, however, that no students were ever broken on the rack there. Nevertheless, this was the first occasion on which today's 'rebels in search of a cause' have found themselves engaged in a real battle. They were clearly determined to make the most of it, imitating their ancestors, magnifying their own grievances, and demonizing their opponents.

What does one do if one wants to play a historic role and history does not oblige? One brings the prestige of the great revolutionary days to the humdrum contemporary problems of civil society, such as, for instance, university administration. If one does not face the real horror of the Gestapo one wins the crown of martyrdom by grappling with the CRS. The brutalities of the police produce the cry: 'de Gaulle: Assassin', and the students' paper (*Action*, 11 June 1968) splashes it on the front page, together with the photograph of a maltreated student. In short, where 'the grievances are not of the essence', and yet there is a revolutionary tradition, one can have an *ersatz* revolution.

Faced with this 'Herostrates complex', Golo Mann asked the Berlin students 'to stop playing at Lenin' (*Encounter*, July 1968). A sympathizer of 'the Movement' described this psychological urge rather well, rooted as he is in the tradition of *The Playboy of the Western World:*

> What is new, for this period of history, is that the Left has recovered for the moment something which once belonged to it, but which it had largely lost: a zest for play-acting. The glum rectitudes of scientistic socialism had tended to repel the dramatic from politics; the appeal to the imagination through play-acting was regarded as a Fascist speciality: this is among the reasons why some of the Old Left think they discern traces of Fascism in the New Left. (Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The New York Review of Books*, 20 June 1968.)

A French sociologist was somewhat more ironical:

> After all, our revolutionaries of 1792 adopted Roman hair-styles and borrowed their phraseology from the ancients, swearing only by Brutus, Cato, and Caius Gracchus. Our 'Marxists' are relatively less anachronistic. (Jules Monnerot, *Le Monde*, 8 June 1968.)

look backwards to Danton, rather than forward to an age of computers and automation.' (*Daily Telegraph*, 3 June 1968.)

'This military epic [of the revolution] gave an epic colour to all the events of internal politics; party struggles were thus raised to the level of the *Iliad*; politicians became giants, and the revolution, which Joseph de Maistre had denounced as satanical, was made divine. The bloody scenes of the Terror were episodes without great significance by the side of the enormous hecatombs of war, and means were found to envelop them in a dramatic mythology; riots were elevated to the same rank as illustrious battles; and calmer historians vainly endeavoured to bring the Revolution and the Empire down to the plane of common history.' (Georges Sorel, *Reflections sur la Violence*.) Sorel refers to the French attitude to the Revolution as being comparable to the way Christians believe in Christianity.

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The answer to the question whether May 1968 was the last revolution of the nineteenth century or the first revolution of the twenty-first century is that it was neither. It was a confrontation of the seventeenth-century national fantasies of Le Roi Soleil de Gaulle with the eighteenth-century social fantasies of the present-day student Camille Desmoulins. (There was play-acting also in the 1956 Hungarian revolution, but there the grievances *were* of the essence and they united the whole country around the symbols of its historic traditions.) For the students, wrote a sympathetic journalist, the revolution 'is not just a far-away goal and an ideal, at the same time a means and an end, the Revolution is life itself'. (*Magazine Litteraire*, May 1968.) In the same magazine Daniel Cohn-Bendit referred in an interview not only to the influence on him of the contemporary revolutionaries, but also to the influence of Rousseau. Some two hundred years ago the following was written (by Linguet to Rousseau, 1764): 'Your ideas are the magic fables of politics; with a stroke of a wand suddenly emerges a society with all people equally endowed, equally rich, and equally happy. . . .'

Such a high pitch of 'idealism' is not just a function of adolescence, it is the material from which 'true believers' are made. It is usually accompanied by some sort of Utopian beliefs. Professor W. H. G. Armytage has shown in his book, *Yesterday's Tomorrows* (1968), that such beliefs always included a dose of nostalgia about the past, and the present ones are no exception. In his analysis of the French students' revolt, Edgar Morin referred to the double fear of the students: the fear of the 'one-dimensional' character of life in a technical-bureaucratic society, and the contrary anxiety about not getting an assured career in it. According to him, this underlies the ambiguity of the revolt which is 'modernist' and 'archaic' at the same time. Others have called it 'the Utopia of the epigones',[19] but whatever the label, there is little doubt about the naiveté of the visions of the future offered.[20]

IN view of the historical correlation between the quest for Utopia and the totalitarian tendency in politics, it is important to know whether the present quest is to be attributed mainly to the passing phase of adolescence or to the rising and more permanent chiliastic wave. No doubt, both elements play a role in the student revolt. It can be looked upon as a contemporary youth movement and compared, as Walter Laqueur has done (*Washington Post*, 7 January 1968), to such movements in the past. It can also be seen as a phenomenon similar in its tendency to previous ideological revivals, sometimes

[19] Wolfgang Rieger, 'Die Utopie der Epigonen', *Die Zeit*, 17 May 1968.

[20] One example: 'The critical problem is this: how can we now take the first steps to what will be, finally, a qualitative change in man? . . . Our only assumptions are that human nature has virtually unbounded potentialities.' (John and Barbara Ehrenreich, 'From Resistance to Revolution', *Monthly Review*, April 1968.)

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related to, but in the longer perspective independent of any particular social category, therefore more enduring.

Because students are a transitional group, with a rapid turnover, they are peculiarly subject to ideological fashions. From this point of view their present beliefs may not last long; fashions change rapidly in our time. But the students argue that 'the present generation gap is not merely fashion; every generation rebels, but few have had such good reason (Steven V. Roberts in *New Leader*, 9 October 1967). This is certainly not due to the deterioration of the relative position of the young in relation to other age groups; it must have something to do with more general reasons affecting this generation of youth. But how can one estimate the relative importance of such reasons? The problems of affluence and of organizational pressures may be felt as keenly by this generation as the problems of poverty and of political dictatorship were felt by an earlier one. Objectively, the hunger marches and bloody totalitarianism in the thirties are in a somewhat different class of phenomena than such questions in the sixties as 'public squalor and private affluence' or the helplessness of the individual 'in an era of big universities, big businesses, big governments, and even big foundations'. But subjectively, they may produce the perception of relative deprivation, and this is what matters. In a situation of acute generational egocentrism even nursery mishaps may be put on the same plane as Auschwitz, and the adolescent sufferings of contemporary young Werthers made into a subject comparable to the martyrdom of the concentration camp victims. If there is searching for a 'cause', sooner or later one is found; if Vietnam did not exist something else would have been embraced, even a poor substitute. It is, however, not very sensible to reproach the present generation with being concerned with contemporary events in the way past generations were concerned with their own contemporary events. It is also normal that they display in their current excitement a certain lack of a sense of proportion. What is disturbing is the fixation with the future which is very similar to the senile fixation with the past on the part of some of their mentors.

It is amusing to hear students saying that 'it is useless to talk to anybody over thirty'. Is it only a failure of communication between generations? Such adolescent egocentrism can be exploited. Mussolini had his '*Giovinezza*'; Karel Capek described in his allegorical play on fascism, *The White Illness*, a demagogic leader whose programme is based on the removal of everybody over thirty (which would have included not only Dr Edmund Leach but also some of the present leaders of 'the Movement'). What is behind this tendency towards infantile regression or adolescent solipsism? It is certainly not any feeling of intellectual superiority on the part of those who display so much 'know-nothing-ism'. Some of them look at their elders as if they were all a band of retired army colonels discussing the second Zulu war. Many observers have noticed the element of anti-rationalism in the

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current wave.[21] It was discernible early enough, as can be seen from the comment of two American authors of a book sympathetic to 'the Movement',[22] who wrote in their introduction: 'They think that the ivory-towered men of ideas have cheated them, lied to them, and that action and spontaneous experience will show them truth.'

The followers of a movement which exalts romanticism, anti-rationalism, *Gemeinschaft* (the community feeling), makes action a self-justificatory criterion, and who are fascinated by violence, can—and do—evoke memories of a movement which extolled all these elements not so long ago, before its leaders met their fate in the Berlin bunker and the Milan *piazza*. However, *comparaison n'est pas raison*. There are many important differences between the present-day 'happenings' and those instigated by fascism.

UNLIKE fascism, the present movement has a libertarian component. It is anti-authoritarian, does not believe in hierarchy, and so far has little respect for organizations or leaders (much less *the* leader). It is not nationalist. One cannot take just some of its characteristics—the tendencies displayed in it are so contradictory—and define 'the Movement' on this basis. It has traits of fascism and Maoism, Trotskyism and anarchism, as well as some inchoate and unprecedented characteristics. To take only some of them as the basis of definition would be a clear case of *pars pro toto*.[23] Perhaps the nearest label applicable would be 'radical populism'.[24] It obviously appeals to the youth, with its longing for romance, 'causes', and Utopia. What are its prospects?

Assuming that humanity, for demographic reasons alone, is not likely to give up a scientific-technological civilization, a movement

[21] Cf. the perceptive articles by the President of the Students' Union at the London School of Economics, Colin Crouch, in *The Guardian* (12 & 13 June 1968).

[22] Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau, *The New Radicals*, p. 7. Among recent writings on students' revolt cf. the special issues devoted to it by *Problemi del Socialismo* (March–April 1968), *Der Spiegel* (FU 64, May 1968), *Encounter* (July & August 1968), *Neues Forum* (June–July 1968), *Il Mulino* (June 1968), *Kursbuch* (*13*, 1968). Interesting articles on the subject appeared also in *Le Monde Diplomatique* (June 1968), *New Society* (30 May & 20 June 1968) and in *Interplay* (June/July 1968). In his letter to *The Times* (12 June 1968), Professor G. R. Elton wrote about the student movements' 'firm opposition to reason and its reliance on explosive emotions. It exalts the fervent assertion and denies all virtue to reflection.'

[23] Cf. Tibor Szamuely, 'Fascism then and now', *Spectator*, 21 June 1968. Cf. also Günther Zehm's article in this issue of *Survey*.

[24] In an article drawing attention to the parallels between the Russian *Narodniki* and the American New Left (in *Western Politica*, No. 1, Spring 1966), Milorad M. Drachkovitch quoted George Orwell: 'Much of left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don't even know that fire is hot.' He also quoted the remark of Alasdair MacIntyre that 'there are unhappy signs of a new populism of the left in which the old Narodnik illusions are being applied to students and the poor'. Two years later, Paul Goodman writing 'In Praise of Populism' (*Commentary*, June 1968), diagnosed a 'world populist revival' which led him to abandon his earlier gloomy idea that we are doomed. At least for him, if not for Marcuse, the future now 'looks brighter'.

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which, however vaguely, resents it has of course no future, at least in the sense of achieving its ostensible goals based on resentments against this kind of civilization. As a youth movement it is likely to be relatively short-lived, as were other youth movements. (History, to use Pareto's remark, is a cemetery of such ephemeral phenomena.) It is the chiliastic tendency which it represents that is most pertinent to the question of its future. Sorel rightly understood that such movements cannot be analysed simply in terms of their ostensible goals.

The current revival of Utopianism in the midst of a scientific-technological 'second industrial revolution' was generally unexpected. But it is paradoxical only to those who either think in terms of economic determinism or assume a necessary relationship between technology and rationality, despite the experience with Marxism, which appeared in the early phase of industrialism and whose success was due to its chiliastic character. If at present a motley crowd of student ideologists and their elders refer to themselves as 'Marxists', it is to preserve their chiliastic faith in Utopia. The fact that 'empirical history' has amply disconfirmed Marx's predictions is of no greater relevance to them than a disconfirmation of a prophecy on which the faith of other millennial and messianic movements in the past was based, the believers in the Second Advent, Sabbatarians, etc.

In a study of the subject,[25] Leon Festinger has demonstrated that 'when prophecy fails', the sectarian 'true believers' usually not only do not abandon their faith, but try to strengthen it by intensified proselytizing. Needless to say, the mass of students does not consist of 'true believers'. Festinger's thesis applies only to the activists in the political *groupuscules* and their spiritual mentors from the alienated intelligentsia, many of whom have shown a kind of adolescent fixation.[26]

[25] Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails*, University of Minnesota Press, 1956.

[26] Two examples of the old 'carriers of chiliasm' exhibiting in their doctrinal fundamentalism the 'Festinger effect':

> It is necessary to make humanity rise to a point where it will be really fraternal, where any form of oppression, whatever it may be, will become impossible, where the mutual aid and the feeling of responsibility towards collectivity will be regarded as an elementary duty, and where labour will become a need for happiness which will last through life. . . . In the communist society, and only in such society, man, as it has been announced, will be liberated and will make freely his own history. This is the point, as Engels used to say. It is the incomparable merit of the Chinese communists to keep alive this great Marxist hope, while the modern revisionists, through ignorance and lack of courage, tend to bring us back to the past. (Jean Baby in *Le Monde*, 27 September 1966.)
>
> I even suppose that Socialist Man will offer the psychoanalyst far richer and more reliable material for research and conclusions, because in him a future Freud will be able to watch the working of the instinctual drives directly, not through a glass darkly, not through the distorting prisms of the analyst's and the patient's class psychology. . . . Yes, Socialist Man will still be pursued by sex and death; but we are convinced that he will be better equipped than we are to cope even with these. . . . The average member of socialist society may yet rise, as Trotsky anticipated, to the stature of Aristotle, Goethe, Marx, who, whatever

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What are the prospects that the true believers, old and new, will continue ' to define the issues ', will be able to transmit their messianic fervour to the new generation of student-activists, and—the most central question of all—will be able to reach other groups in the Western populations? The French experience may not generally apply, but it raises certain points.

The first is that the *groupuscules* somehow managed to achieve a *tregua Dei* in their sectarian bickering. Cohn-Bendit and other student leaders understood that the movement could advance only on the wave of vague sentiments articulated in general slogans rather than on the basis of a specific programmatic platform, each point of which would create dissent among the contending factions. The student masses could be mobilized only in this way. But there is always a price to be paid for such a consensus. The cohesion of an amalgam which includes pacifism and guerrilla violence, libertarianism and authoritarianism, youthful enthusiasm and archaic ideas, is under severe strain, and the French defeat will inevitably lead to the end of ' the truce ', the reassessment of events by separate doctrinaire groups, and to a wider political differentiation among students. In other words, the element of youthfulness will become less pronounced and the political side of the movement will become more prominent. In the next period many of the students will probably lose their penchant for Utopia and acquire more earthy political attitudes. Others—the activistic ' true believers '—will find it difficult to maintain a ' non-denominational platform ', which was the precondition of their initial success. M. Cohn-Bendit, who claimed an affinity with Leszek Kolakowski, might find relevant some of the ideas expressed by the latter in his book on *Religious Consciousness and the Church Affiliation* (Warsaw, 1965). Kolakowski analyses in detail the fate of the Dutch sects at the time of the seventeenth-century Counter-Reformation and comes to the following conclusion:

> Historically, the attempts to create a non-denominational Christianity appear to us as purely negative phenomena. Their existence can only be perceived in relation to the organized religion against which they rose. As they cannot basically transform the collective and hierarchical forms of religious life in line with their own ideas, which would signify (and in some cases does in fact signify) the adoption of a realistic, rational structure denying the very premise of their protest, the non-denominational Christians are at best able to create inside (or parallel to) the church communities, pressure groups which force their opponents to assimilate some of their ideas

their sexual instincts and aggressive drives, embody some of mankind's highest achievements so far. . . . We have to raise socialism back to its own height. We have to explain to our working classes and intelligentsia why the Soviet Union and China have not been able to produce and could not produce Socialist Man, despite their remarkable achievements which give them a right to our recognition and solidarity. We must restore the image of Socialist Man to all its spiritual splendour. (Isaac Deutscher at the second Socialist Scholars' Conference in New York, *National Guardian*, 24 September 1966.)

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> in an emasculated form, leading to some modification of organized religion. Non-denominational Christianity, to the extent that it means anything in social life, was a negative force influencing the reintegration of the positive Christianity; but it had no real power to disintegrate the Churches. Favourable circumstances can shake it into an effective reform movement. But it can take social root only if it accepts the principle of organization, that is if it denies its own principles. . . .

The anti-structuralist character of the students' protest and its anti-organizational ideology kept the movement inchoate, but afloat on a non-denominational basis. Yet, in the age of big organizations against which many of them protest, it is unlikely that the semi-anarchistic character of the movement can continue. Some of its more tough-minded leaders are bound to discover—as did Lenin faced with his own *Narodnik* tradition—'the principle of organization'. Some of them already operate the levers of manipulation in an organizational form. But after the French experience many more in 'the Movement' asking themselves the eternal populist question, 'What is to be done?' will come to deny the very principle of its protest. This would mean that the one attractive feature of 'the Movement', its rejection of 'the Apparatus', will disappear. If 'total change' and not reform is the goal, the only form of struggle which would look to the activists as having an effective chance would be an *organized* struggle. They would, perhaps reluctantly, come to the conclusion that if you want to change 'the System' in an age of organization, you have to have one yourself.[27] The tender-minded would, of course, fall by the wayside and write about 'the Movement Betrayed' and about another 'God that Failed'. The real question will be, however, whether it would not also mean undermining the one element which kept 'the Movement' going, through a wider appeal—whether indeed it would not mean a return to ineffective sectarian bickering and political sterility. Even more acute for the activists in 'the Movement' is the dilemma involved in the question of reaching broader 'popular masses'. The Utopian fundamentalists, coming as they do after the experience of Social Democracy's (and also the Western communists') timid collaboration with 'the System', may find that the role of a Leninist 'detonator', activated by a dose of Maoist voluntarism, is not hopeful, if there is no material to detonate. This would still appear to be the case in the industrial countries of the West, where popular discontents are limited to partial claims, claims unlikely to lead to the overthrow of 'the System', even of the Gaullist system.

[27] Here is the comment of Maurice Duverger in *Le Nouvel Observateur* (15 May 1968), the schizophrenic organ of the older followers of the New Left: 'In modern societies, complex and compartmentalized, the "masses" strictly speaking do not exist. They cannot really act, if not through the parties, trade unions, and groupings of this type, without the support of which nothing durable and profound can be achieved.'

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Their one hopeful thought is connected with the strategic vulnerability of the complex modern mechanisms of state, society, and economy. Military strategists noted long ago that increase in power goes with a partial increase in vulnerability (e.g. in the last war the bombing of ball-bearing factories and petrol dumps). Strikes in a strategic sector of the economy are almost as effective in paralysing much wider areas of the economy as more general strikes. (Marcuse emphasized this in one of his lectures, where he used the example of the liftmen's strike in New York.) However, as the French experience has shown to the activists, even a General Strike following an activated student body capable of occupying the universities is not sufficient to achieve a victory. If the goal is articulated in terms of political power, the prospects look even less hopeful. Apart from France and Italy, there is no credible 'left-wing' alternative to 'the Establishment'.

EVER since Stirner said, 'We are the first generation in history which realized that . . .', the sentiment has been repeated in subsequent generations with monotonous regularity. The feeling of historical uniqueness is common to every generation entering the political scene. This has been true ever since the 'idea of history' became predominant in Europe. It is justified by definition, but surely it has become more than a little suspect. In the form of its current pathological exaggeration, it has outrun the individual solipsism of Stirner's *Der Einzige* towards a generational solipsism of youth ideology. There is a tendency in it to try to deny all links with other generations and to stress only the differences.[28] It is particularly neurotic at present, when 'the acceleration of history' has not only rendered the adaptation to change more difficult, but has also made it even more necessary to learn from all the past failures of—to use the slogan of the Sorbonne students—imagination seizing power.

It would be, however, an optical error to look at the phenomenon of 'the Movement' alone and make on this basis generational generalizations. It cannot be taken in isolation from the previous generation against whose 'authority' the revolt is ostensibly directed. If so, then never in history has 'authority' been so willing, indeed so eager, to give the impression that it is not authoritative. The revolt coincides with a general evolution towards permissiveness, from the family to the public level. It makes one suspect that the two phenomena may be related in the way, as Erich Fromm argued, 'escape from freedom' and

[28] John Sparrow quoted the following exchange: '"Can't we discuss this as human beings?" asked a senior member in a "provincial" university the other day, having reached an impasse in argument with a student leader: "I am not interested in you as a human being" was the cold reply'. (*The Listener*, 4 July 1968.) Stephen Spender reported a not dissimilar conversation with a Sorbonne student: 'He told how he had been asked by someone why he had not explained things adequately to the authorities at his university, and how he had answered: "because one does not enter into discussions with people who are non-existent".' (*New York Review of Books*, 11 July 1968.)

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fascism were related. Perhaps after 'escape from authority' the phase will come of a search *for* authority. As students' disturbances create, in any case, a 'backlash', a reaction in favour of order and stronger authority, a new authoritarian dialectic may be released which will leave behind the present phase: leaderless as well as permissive. In any case, there is little doubt that the older generation indulged in the double error of both taking the revolt too seriously and not seriously enough.

Too seriously, because the question whether the tendencies existing in 'the Movement' will develop depends largely on the older generation. The spectrum of reactions ranges from an exaggeration of the danger through the flattery of youth to the masochistic breast-beating of some elderly band-wagon-jumpers. The sensation-hungry mass media tend to magnify every event, but even serious press accounts of M. Cohn-Bendit as a revolutionary genius with student masses all over the world seething in revolutionary discontent bordered on the ridiculous.

In Great Britain in particular, the ideologists of the movement face a difficult task in the empirical, non-ideological, suspicious-of-general-concepts intellectual tradition of this country. Somehow, even revolution has a tendency here to dissolve in compromise, and the flames of revolutionary passion lead to such inspiring acts as the Hornsey art students repainting their loos. This is hardly 'the storming of heaven'.

In the United States the problem is different, but also there the 'student problem' is not to be put on the same level as the Negro problem. Only an exaggerated sense of historical self-importance can lead a 'political scientist' to begin his article on the subject with the words: 'Since April 23, Columbia University has been experiencing a major convulsion reminiscent of the Great Revolution of 1879' (Dankwart A. Rustow in *New Leader*, 20 May 1968).

IF the notion of collective guilt was not so primitive, whether applied to nations or to generations, it would be arguable that it is not the young, but the older generation that is the problem. There can be little doubt that in many cases *les parents terribles* are worse than *les enfants terribles*. Some of them have moved from revolt against 'poverty amidst plenty' in the thirties to a revolt against affluent society in the sixties, at the time as they themselves moved from poverty to affluence, to practise alienation at 50,000 dollars a year. The revolutionary Establishment of New York and London, thrilled with revolutionary prospects, and displaying the characteristic *Salon-Maoismus*, contributes to the orgy of snobbery attendant upon the current Utopian wave. Long before the 'Black Power' spokesman asked the students assembled at the London School of Economics to establish the Revolutionary Socialist Student Federation, whether they know how to make a petrol bomb, the *New York Review of Books* published a diagram of and a recipe

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for a Molotov cocktail on its cover page. This has not prevented, of course, its political writers from deploring 'American violence'.

In France the self-abasement of the elderly 'progressives' reached its peak during the May 'revolution'. At the meeting of Jean-Paul Sartre with the students at the Sorbonne, Max Pol-Fouchet exclaimed with pathos appropriate to the occasion: 'Representing a generation which has failed I ask you not to fail!'

The members of the Italian 'progressive intelligentsia' are no less sentimental. Even the communist poet and film director, Pier Paolo Pasolini, reproached them (*Expresso*, 16 June 1968) for trying 'to regain virginity by making a show of adulation for the adolescents', lines which embarrassed the Party in its attempts to pass itself for the champion of students.[29]

It would not be surprising if the students, finding themselves between political abuse[30] and generational flattery, would be somewhat bewildered. A generational gap is not an abnormal phenomenon, but this one is somewhat unusual.

It is from this viewpoint that the question of students' revolt not being taken seriously enough should be approached. 'Class '68' is not the last in history. Flattery tends to inflate students' egos, but at the same time it tends to injure their intellectual potentialities, by applying to them double standards of assessment. Their chance of overcoming the adolescent *Sturm und Drang* will be diminished if their elders flatter them, and take their ideological pretensions with an uncritical sentimentality. The elderly 'progressives' will not get the gratitude

[29] The electoral poster of the PCI addressed to the young voters presented a policeman threatening a young man with a stick. The caption ran: 'Your first vote to say *no* to the authoritarianism in the University, in the factory, and in the state.' (*Rinascita*, 17 May 1968.)

[30] The communists overtaken 'from the left' in the West, and 'from the right' in the East were particularly abusive. *L'Humanité* poured scorn on the student leaders. Georges Marchais, a leading Party figure, referred to M. Cohn-Bendit as 'a German anarchist', and to 'the German philosopher, Herbert Marcuse, who lives in the United States' in order to play on chauvinistic sentiments. The East German press, after an enthusiastic initial reaction to the student riots, became much more critical, pointing to 'the limits of the abstract democratism of "anti-authoritarian" methods of organization' (*Forum*, May 1968). The Soviet press, like the French communists, castigated the 'false revolutionaries' and 'ultra-leftists'. The Polish *Trybuna Ludu* (19 May 1968) wrote about 'the half-baked pie peppered with sexualism and narcomania'. But the Chinese press has denounced 'the traitorous activities of the French revisionist leading clique . . . supported and carried out in co-operation with the Soviet revisionist ruling clique' (*Renmin Ribao*, 6 June 1968). By 'slandering the progressive students as "anarchists"' they have been 'again unmasked as dirty scabs' (*Peking Review*, 7 June 1968). For good measure the pro-Chinese Belgian communist paper, *La Voix du Peuple* (24 May 1968), reiterated that 'in the case of Poland and Czechoslovakia, the students' "movement" was closely linked with the "ultra-revisionist" trend, aiming at the accelerated re-establishment of capitalism on the political, cultural, and economic level.' On the other hand, the Polish leader, Zenon Kliszko, Gomulka's close friend, said on the subject of the French student revolt that it had been inspired by 'the imperialist diversion [which] deliberately passes off upon various youth groups a black flag to prevent a mass defection of the younger generation to the red flag.' (*Zycie Warszawy*, 21 June 1968.)

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of the young for all their attempts at ingratiation. New *gurus* will replace old *gurus*, as new fads are already replacing old fads. Their prospects are as dim as those of the white 'liberals' who tried to ingratiate themselves with the Negro racists. In both cases masochism led to the transgression of the line separating self-abasement from an authentic sense of equality.

Politically, the students' revolt will have of course different effects in different countries. But generally it provokes a Hobbesian reaction among the middle-, and (where it is integrated) the working class. It strengthens the authoritarian tendencies it set out to oppose. It is directly responsible for the shift of the French electorate towards the 'paternalism' of de Gaulle, which the students so deplored. If there is a 'second round' resulting from the inflationary effects of the wage rises, neither the students nor any libertarian cause will benefit from it. In the USA the disturbances have created a backlash which increased Nixon's electoral chances. In Italy the revolt strengthened the Christian Democratic stronghold. In Germany it has the same effect, not to mention the improved position of the neo-Nazis—whose paper, *National Zeitung* (21 May 1968), splashed its first page with the headline: '*Rettet Deutschland vor den roten "Studenten".*' In Britain it certainly does not improve the electoral chances of the Labour Party.

Socially, the students' revolt may have a marginal effect on the problem of university reform. The argument that it is the threat of the revolution (first used by the father of John Stuart Mill at the time of the 1832 Reform Bill) which is necessary to make the conservatives implement reforms has some validity in it, but only when there is a strong opposition to reforms. Some countries, like France, need university reform very badly, others need less radical adjustments. But in each case the problem is that of a mass of universities producing an 'educational proletariat' with *élite* aspirations. A trend towards 'educational factories' is, of course, quite incompatible with the original idea of the university. Yet, although it may be true (as Mr Kingsley Amis said) that 'more means worse', to reverse the trend towards the expansion of higher education in advanced industrial societies is neither desirable, nor feasible. In the future there may come to be a greater status-differentiation between various establishments of higher education and a better adjustment to the occupational requirements of society.

It is difficult to guess what modifications in the social structure of modern societies will be necessitated by 'technetronic' and demographic developments, not to mention the effect of the advances in biochemical sciences. But whatever they are, they cannot be introduced by 'revolutionary means', although they may well involve radical decisions. One thing is clear. To look at present-day social change through the spectacles of the myth of the French revolution is an exercise in anachronism. At the time of Louis XVI the average life expectation was about thirty years; now, in the industrial countries of the West,

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it is about seventy. Thus the confrontation of two trends—towards the increased role of youth and towards longevity—present a new situation. When our 'generation in revolt' reaches the age of those they are revolting against, it will form (barring catastrophes) a more sizable part of the population, both relatively and absolutely, than the corresponding age-group does at present. The real social problem will exist long after the present ideologies of youth disappear.

The student unrest may or may not be a portent of things to come; however, the shape of the future will depend more on the rest of society than on the students. The young, so many in the West emphasize, have a right to engage in rebellion and to dream of Utopia. The real issue is whether this could become a millenarian movement embracing other social groups, and whether or not it could lead to a capitulation of the older generations possessing more historical experience.

Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* ends with a quotation from Walter Benjamin: 'It is only for the sake of those without hope that hope is given.' This was a cry of despair at the beginning of the fascist era. Is the present situation really comparable? Have the students, whatever their grievances or forebodings, nothing to lose but their hopes?

'We have become more conscious of the future', wrote Edward Shils, 'and at the same time the shape of the future is more opaque or appalling'.[31] To embrace Utopia may conceivably provide an easy emotional way out. If one is too long on a bleak diet of the dead past and mediocre present, one turns to a bright future for psychic sustenance. Yet the paradox of Utopianism is that historically it has invariably led to results grimly at variance with the original ideals of the true believers.

With the present 'information explosion' and the 'acceleration of history', the future is becoming the present soon enough. Even science fiction finds it difficult to keep up. When the idea of 'Imagination seizing Power' was entertained in the past, the interval between conception and execution was not so hectically brief. Even so the bright Utopian hopes did not survive for long the seizure of power in those twentieth-century instances when modern image-makers were strong enough to take control. Alas, students of revolution realize this better than revolutionary students. They know what happens to imagination when it is seized by power.

[31] 'The future and the Intellectuals', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, October 1967.

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THE FRENCH STUDENT REVOLT

François Bourricaud

WHEN Rector Roche made the decision to call the police into the Sorbonne on Friday 3 May, it was the start of a crisis of the first magnitude, both in the university and in politics. This decision, however, shocking as it was, could not have come as a complete surprise to anyone. The few remarks which follow are intended only to provide a brief summary of the circumstances surrounding this event and a very cautious forecast of the results which it is likely to have.

Since October 1967, the university establishments in the Paris region have undergone a process of rapid disintegration which has brought them very near to the sort of condition which Durkhem describes as *anomie*. The rapid increase in the number of enrolments has produced a phenomenon well known to any student of pre-revolutionary periods; deficiencies of administration, both from a qualitative and a quantitative point of view. The hordes of students in the first 'cycle' experienced hopelessly overcrowded conditions, especially in view of the standards laid down by the reforms of last year. These conditions forced the students to work very hard, and girls and boys were faced with a comparatively specialized form of education for which, fresh from the *lycées*, they were ill prepared. The confusion was further aggravated by the lack of contact between teachers and students, who were for the most part thrown in at the deep end, without orientation or guidance, to chance their luck, as it were, in poorly defined courses which were badly organized and not geared in any way to career opportunities (except the teaching profession, which is rapidly becoming saturated).

This description is correct when applied to arts faculties and more specifically to the humanities and philosophy departments. (It would be far less accurate to extend it indiscriminately to include science and law faculties.) The striking thing in the humanities departments is the extent of the aimless and irresponsible attitude on the part of the students. It seems that many students enrol merely for want of something better to do, and once they have become members of the faculty, have very little idea of what awaits them when they leave. The position of these students, who have little motivation and not much idea of the professional future which awaits them, and are poorly integrated into an amorphous and anonymous university institution, is diametrically opposed to that of the students of the *grandes écoles*, who are recruited through competition and provided from the first moment of their entry into the school with almost total security as far as their employment and future are concerned. But the reform of higher education, set in motion during M. Fouchet's period of office, relied precisely on

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the assumption that the quality of entrants would be sufficiently guaranteed by the traditional examinations (particularly the sacrosanct *baccalauréat*); in contrast to the *grandes écoles*, and despite the growing number of entrants, in arts and law particularly, the watchword for the faculties was to remain '*Laissez faire, laissez passer*'. At the opening of the renowned 'commission of 18' the minister had, after all, declared that he would give the members of the commission a completely free hand on every issue except one. The right of a student to enrol in the faculty of his choice was not to be interfered with.

The haphazard growth of the arts faculties and the accumulation of students with no future in formless and disorganized humanities departments were a virtually complete condemnation of M. Fouchet's policy; and every autumn it became a little clearer to everyone that 'something'—and something serious—was bound to happen. Everyone expected the beginning of the 1968 academic year to present an explosive situation, especially in the Paris region. But the inevitability of the 'catastrophe' had been spoken of so often that the prognostications of observers oscillated between pessimism and optimism, according to whim or circumstances. Would it not be enough, once more, for the government to make additional funds available, to create a few hundred extra teaching posts . . . so that everything might be settled at the last minute by bargaining between the authorities in the Rue de Grenelle and the universities?

However, in a few days the university crisis became a political crisis; the repercussions of this are still hard to assess. To find the causes of this amazing escalation the sociologist's reaction is to examine the French system of centralization, in which, as soon as they reach a certain degree of seriousness, all problems are referred to the highest level. If the University of Columbia is occupied by students, American opinion may be shocked, perhaps, but the institutions of the Republic are not endangered. In France a procession of students becomes a riot, and the riot only just fails to sweep away everything in its path.

TWO hypotheses immediately spring to mind to explain this extraordinary dramatization of a crisis which could not, except for its timing and its intensity, have been hard to foresee. By making a comparison which Victor Hugo would not take exception to, and from which M. Mitterrand has not ceased to draw fine oratorical effect, we can contrast 13 May 1958 with 13 May 1968. The Gaullist regime can in this way be seen to be paying for its original mistake, and its extreme frailty can be felt even by those who have so far been deceived by its superficial brilliance. Indifference and insensitivity to deep movements of public opinion and to the reactions of one or another group, and brutal repression combined with an inability to disentangle the web and to act decisively while there is still time, is the price we pay for having a system of excessive concentration in which everything

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depends on one man, and nothing can be done until the Sphinx has spoken.

In addition to this interpretation, emphasizing the particular weaknesses of the present French regime, there is the viewpoint which concentrates on the problems common to youth everywhere. This age-group has become a reservoir of a vast source of aggressive energy. Young people today mature early, but these precocious adults are denied the fulfilment of their aspirations by the difficulties they encounter in trying to gain a sound foothold in the 'consumer society'.

The point of convergence which I think I can discern between these two interpretations is the escalation and the projection on to a political level, and perhaps on to a social one, of a crisis and a malaise which was at first localized, but which quickly took on the proportions of a universal upheaval. In this respect the events of May 1968 constitute a particularly striking example of the way in which a crisis matures slowly and quietly, how one incident can trigger off an explosion which reverberates and spreads until it reaches the forefront of the political arena. In this connexion there are obvious comparisons with well-known periods in our history: the February days of 1848, the occupation of factories in 1936, the barricades of 1960. Using this comparison as a starting point, one can sketch the outline of the 'great French convulsion'.

A STRIKING thing, even before the crisis broke out, was the university authorities' insensitivity to that section of society which they are supposed to control. I have already mentioned deficiencies of administration. This expression does not only apply to environmental problems, to which different categories of teachers, students and deans so regularly draw the attention of the public authorities. It also covers the more subtle effects of lack of contact and alienation between the different 'strata'[1] of teachers, and in this way explains the errors in assessing the relative force of the different factions who were competing with each other for the support of the inert mass of students.

Their apathy, which must be seen less as indifference than as an incapacity for articulate self-expression, has taken two main forms. First, the majority of students remained conformists, at least until the March events which brought M. Cohn-Bendit to glory. The students are separated from each other by the divisions between 'cycles', years and field of specialization. Furthermore, the traditional disciplines have remained apart, or have at least followed a long way behind, in comparison with the 'key sectors' (sociology, psychology and the humanities).

This kaleidoscopic impression is confirmed when the observer moves from the consideration of the faculty microcosm to that of the national student organizations. By the time the crisis had hardened, the latter

[1] To use Michel Crozier's expression.

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no longer had any real influence. The UNEF (*Union Nationale des Etudiants de France*) was divided and discredited and had elected its president [2] amid disputes interspersed with violence. The academic authorities, at faculty level as well as at higher levels, were aware that they no longer had a partner for discussion and the students a representative spokesman.

The lack of representation of student organizations meant that there was a proliferation of small groups ('*groupuscules*') hovering on the borders of Trotskyism, Maoism, and anarchy. The dialectic of these small groups is to oppose its rivals in a pseudo-struggle to the death, in order to impose themselves on the amorphous masses, splitting up and attacking each other, and vying with each other in invective and insult. But as long as the assault remained verbal, the authorities were aware mainly of its excesses and effectiveness. It was difficult for them to take the measure of a movement which they treated first of all with scorn, and later attributed to 'a few irresponsibles'. The great achievement of M. Cohn-Bendit is to have understood that instead of becoming embroiled in factional quarrels, it was necessary to accompany speech with action. Finding fault with Mao, Althuser, or Marcuse does not worry anyone, nor does it interest many people. To insult a minister who has come to open the swimming pool at Nanterre, or to call the Dean a 'Nazi' reveals a very good understanding of how to issue a political challenge.

The combination of organizations stripped of their representation and of small extremist radical groups is one of the characteristics of all 'French convulsions'. It results in instability, a situation in which it is impossible to predict what will happen next, in which *all* initiative evaporates, and which reduces the impetus of all measures, whether opportune or not. But the risks which are inherent in any choice are difficult to appreciate, and unwillingness to take excessive risks has the effect, above all, of making people cautious, and discouraging those who are not immediately concerned from interfering, or those who are not pursuing—as is the revolutionary or the provocateur—a plan and a strategy. In this way one can explain the fact that for a long time M. Cohn-Bendit was taken no more seriously than, let us say, the people whom the fall of Louis-Philippe was to bring to the forefront during the period leading up to the explosion of February 1848, people of whom as acute an observer as Tocqueville, as he himself admitted in his *Souvenirs*, had never heard. A more expressive but less analytical way of saying the same thing is to contrast the façade of the 'legal country' with the underground rumblings of the 'real country', which are never noticed until the columns of the temple lie shattered on the ground.

This lack of awareness, this slowness of the authorities, forced on to the defensive, without any hold on a situation which they did not

[2] M. Sauvageot.

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understand, and of which they only became aware when they had already lost control, was apparent all through the events leading up to the closing of the faculty of arts at Paris. First, in March, after a series of highly symbolic gestures (the occupation of the council room at Nanterre, the attempt to use the lecture rooms for free discussions and demonstrations on the most controversial subjects, the pasting and daubing of slogans and insults, in the style of the Chinese cultural revolution), the authorities eventually decided that 'something must be done'. But the cumbersomeness and slowness of the disciplinary machinery were then shown in all their limitations. The university students in their turn discovered the common and disappointing fact that at the beginning of a 'revolutionary' period, at a time when the 'revolutionary', that is to say the serious nature of the said movement has not yet been established, when the quotation marks have not yet disappeared, the leaders of the possible rebellion are only liable for the same sort of punishment as poachers and smugglers.

How did the 'disorders' at Nanterre during the first weeks of May acquire a political dimension, in the strict sense of the word? The affair can be seen as a topsy-turvy game of reluctant assaults and timid withdrawals. There has already been a great deal of comment on Rector Roche's decision to call in the police. Even if there were precedents for it, it had the very serious disadvantage of directing and crystallizing university opposition (where the professors and students were only too happy to feel themselves bound together in the solidarity of the 'delinquent community', in order to protest against the 'abuses of power'). When, at an early stage the police brutalities increased the indignation aroused by the invasion of the Sorbonne by the police force to a paroxysm, one essential protagonist in the university upheavals—the professorial body—made itself unavailable for any possible mediation between the police, the university administration and the students. As for the student leadership, their very weak representation forced them—and almost authorized them—on to a course of total irresponsibility. In the tumult of indignation, they sometimes equalled, without ever outdoing, the spokesmen of the unions of research workers and teachers in higher education. The multiplicity of communiqués and statements widely broadcast by the press and radio, for example the dramatic news issued on the morning of Tuesday 7 on the 'kidnapping' of M. Sauvageot, who was found a few hours later in his bed, did not help in the search for a solution to the problems posed by the closing of the Sorbonne and by the release of the students arrested after the demonstrations of Friday 3 May.

WE must now analyse the irresolute conduct of the government which seemed completely lost in this strange situation. The Gaullist regime had overcome more serious, indeed tragic, trials, such as the barricades of 1960 and the putsch of 1961. But the situation

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in 1968 was fundamentally different. Public support had allowed General de Gaulle, in the two previous confrontations, to hold his own against his adversaries, who were, after all, two thousand kilometres away. This time public opinion, particularly in Paris, was clearly for those who defied, and who 'challenged', a strict, though embarrassed, government, whose freedom of action was further inhibited by the fact that M. Pompidou happened to be absent at that time.

A minor but nonetheless very instructive lesson of the current crisis is the importance of the Prime Minister in the Gaullist constitution. The President of the Republic does not concern himself with accidents and minor events. His interest in day-to-day events is limited to those which he chooses to consider important and those which fall within his private sphere. In this way he avoids becoming involved in petty matters; he does not bother about the price of milk, to use one of the General's own expressions. This practice has a further obvious advantage: it allows the ministers a certain autonomy in the running of their departments. The Prime Minister acts as a buffer between the plans of the state—those of the President—and those of the administration; he is at the same time engine, driver, and transmission belt. If this machinery fails, there is the fatal risk that continuity between ministerial departments and the supreme decision-making organ will break down—while the latter is in no position to take appropriate measures in time.

This rupture in the hierarchy of the organs of information and 'control' brought about by the absence of the Prime Minister helps to explain the paralysis of the government during the week of 6–11 May. Seen from this angle, the tragic fluctuations between attack and retreat, which were so irritatingly apparent to observers, become a little clearer. The first preoccupation of a high civil servant, and even more particularly of a *courtier*, is the scrutiny of the intentions of the supreme authority, which is, after all, the maker of decisions and the source of favours. Even if he is prepared to assume very wide responsibilities within his sphere of competence the executive sees himself first and foremost as obliged to keep within his limits, not to go beyond the instructions which he has received, even if he believes he is justified in interpreting them. The tone had been set for the council of ministers on Wednesday 8 May by the very firm statement of the President of the Republic. Had General de Gaulle paid to the events concerning the closing of the Sorbonne and the violence of Friday 3 and Monday 6 the full attention they deserved? It is not clear. In any case, in the light of the position which the President had adopted and confirmed by the comments of the Minister of Information, the cautious concessions attempted the same afternoon in the National Assembly by the Minister of National Education constituted, if we take into account the psychology of the actors as well as their own understanding of their roles, the limit of daring allowed to a minister who did not have the

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comforting presence of the Prime Minister between himself and the head of state. This exaggerated caution on the part of the leaderless government matched the absence of any responsible spokesman on the side of the students and the rebellious university elements. The statements of M. Sauvageot in response to the discreet overtures of the minister quickly succeeded in blocking all initiatives; by Thursday evening affairs had returned to the position of the day before, with the threat of a brutal confrontation. The same process in preparation for the same sinister denouement was repeated on Friday; the efforts of M. Sarda to find a solution to the problem of the imprisoned students failed in the face of the double obstacle created by ministerial caution and the increasing demands of those speaking in the name of 'the fighters of the barricades'.

What can this government, at grips with adversaries whose very irresponsibility helped make them invulnerable, which brought the hatefulness of repression to the notice of a public which no longer responds to anything except the horror of blood and the romanticism of the barricades, count on? In fact it had at its disposal two trump cards which enabled it, by the end of the week, to scrape through, not well, and only temporarily, but having avoided an upheaval which could have had fatal results if the crisis had continued or rebounded. First, the Prime Minister returned in the nick of time to pierce the abscess and accept what could no longer be refused. Above all, throughout the week, the attitude of the legal, official opposition—'His Majesty's Opposition'—facilitated the government's task.

The Communist Party and the unions under its control had no choice but to attack police repression; but far from pressing home their advantage, they restrained their supporters and warned them against 'provocateurs'. How can we explain the reserve and moderation of the Communist Party? The observer hesitates, and at the moment it seems very difficult to analyse in depth, because the motives, attitudes and calculations of the communist leaders and militants are not only very complex but also very fluid. The horror of anarchy and the hatred of Trotskyism are easy enough to recognize. As for the schemes of the communists, they are centred on the comparison between the advantages which would accrue to the Party in the event of the downfall of the Gaullist regime, which is now a real possibility, and the immense risks attached to this. These considerations are to be understood within an international as well as a domestic context, but we must concentrate on the second category of risks in this examination. To act and to adopt a position in such a characteristically unstable situation demands exceptional adroitness, an ability to take risks, to become involved and to extricate oneself from difficulties, in other words, extreme freedom of action and manoeuvre. Thus, the liberation of the Sorbonne, open to all kinds of influences and trends, creates a completely new situation.

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THIS event has no exact precedents in any episode of our history; although it recalls at the same time February 1848, the commune of 1871 and May 1936, it deserves its own separate analysis. We will examine it specifically to see how the university institution reacts to an electric shock unequalled in intensity. The old edifice has been turned upside down, and after this upheaval a sort of anarchy has every chance of continuing, at least in the arts faculties and particularly in the humanities departments. It is still too soon to attempt to forecast how a great body which has been the victim of such a commotion will manage to establish new relationships within a milieu which is so strange to it. But whether through unconscious submission to historical trends, or through profound identification of the present situation with earlier revolutionary periods, the Nanterre teachers are talking of a 'constituent assembly'. One expression more than any other is on everyone's lips, students', teachers' and deans': university autonomy. The meaning of this is ambiguous; it suggests both self-government, with a system of student representation whereby all factions and small groups have a chance of dominating, and a competitive and differentiated system more or less like the Anglo-Saxon model. The ambiguity will persist until the students realize that in attempting to build Harvard or Berkeley they are allowing themselves to fall into a situation more comparable to that of the Latin American universities.

One must admire the speed with which the university people have started to rebuild their house, almost before it has fallen down. Their preoccupation with examination problems is characteristic; somehow the examinations must take place, in the most favourable conditions possible. This concern can easily be explained by the fact that examinations are as important for the teacher, into whose hands they place a greatly feared power, as for the students whose dependence they confirm. The exam system is based on a system of standards, some of which are questionable, but which are too closely associated with the values essential to French culture, like equality and objectivity, to be subjected to a radical alteration. Despite the university's ruinous inability to adapt, its authoritarianism in teaching relationships, and the likelihood of the gulf between teachers and students arousing more and more violent resistance, it has one great strength. It is grafted on to needs, on the satisfaction of which the survival of any modern society depends; discovery, the transmission of knowledge, and of the 'know-how' which is indispensable to techniques and production. After all, is the critical university of 1968 likely to last any longer than the clubs of 1848, of which Flaubert has left us such a wonderful description in *Sentimental Education?* Even in the arts faculties 'Congolization' will have its term and its limits imposed by the demands of necessity, by the nature of things, to which we will have to do justice in the end.

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BUT the great convulsion, whose first spasm was unleashed by the university crisis, is continuing in a political form, which turned into a social crisis. It is this liaison which we must now consider if we really want to understand in all its intensity this fascination for the void which seizes hold of some Frenchmen from time to time in an almost irrepressible way. Have the conditions generally associated with these brutal explosions (1848, March 1871, June 1936) culminated in 1968? Although it is still too soon to say, we can at least attempt to state the problem, if not very accurately. The following conditions must be taken into account: the accumulation of frustrations and resentment and the structure of a network likely to spread them (and, conversely, the restraints which moderate them), the flexibility of these impulses, and finally their more or less explicitly negative and destructive character.

French society is going through a crisis of modernization which has gathered speed these last few years with the prospect of European integration and the spur of international competition. To what extent has France really moved with the times? The American expression 'shotgun wedding' comes to mind to moderate the optimism contained in the famous affirmation of General de Gaulle. In fact, fear in the face of the challenge of modernity takes different forms according to social groups. But they have a common character, which is to mobilize and activate reactionary forces. Perhaps the art of politics today consists principally of transforming this fear into hope, of changing to something positive that force which, despite its fine appellation of 'contestation', is in danger of becoming nothing more than a powerless rage of self-destruction. The extreme instability of our societies was brutally brought home to us recently by events such as the murder of Martin Luther King, the attempt on the life of Rudi Dutschke and the violence which followed it, the great French convulsion, and the assassination of Robert Kennedy. And in these different cases, the destabilizing element was the eruption of youth, the characteristic ambiguity of which brings with it the worst menaces of infantile and barbaric behaviour, while at the same time drawing attention to the dangers of sclerosis and the necessity for 'more soul'.

It is instructive to consider this expression of Bergson, forgotten today, in terms of the prospects of the crisis we are facing. If the great French convulsions of the nineteenth century were followed by repressive reaction and almost sepulchral prostration, it was because the negative elements of hatred and open violence, or of involution, reaction, lack of realism, and powerlessness, predominated to such a traumatic and intolerable degree, that they in turn launched the reaction against fear and repression, the regular return of which punctuates our history.

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IS THERE A LEFT-WING FASCISM?

Günther Zehm

PROPOSITIONS that sound like slogans and yet make people think are rare in political life. But the recent and by now famous statement—by Professor Jürgen Habermas, a philosopher of the 'Frankfurt Left'—that Berlin's left-radical activists were in danger of slipping into a '*linken Faschismus*', a 'left-wing fascism', was such a proposition. It got under the skin; it was eminently quotable; those to whom it referred dearly wished it had never been said. On the other hand this proposition is in no way a bar to argument, as slogans generally are; on the contrary, it stimulates discussion. It seems likely to open up new perspectives, to raise unaccustomed questions.

The effect of this statement was all the greater because it was thrown into the debate by a left-wing socialist, a man who—although he has long since parted ways with his teacher, Wolfgang Abendroth—has fundamentally never broken free from the latter's old-style Marxism. Thus all suspicion was ruled out from the start that Habermas might have been using the expression 'left-wing fascism' in conformity with current definitions of totalitarianism, which make national socialism and communism appear as merely two sides of one and the same coin. The Frankfurt professor was not concerned to bring out the factors common to communism and fascism, but to make a clear distinction between them. In reproaching the SDS with fascism he wished to make clear to them that they had stepped outside the orbit of Marxist theory and practice.

Now the mere reproach of 'fascism' is not in itself evidence of a particular quality of insight. It has now become customary all over the world to call one's political opponent 'a fascist'. This is intended to insult and wound him and make it impossible for his adherents to continue their loyalty. Chinese and Indonesians, Egyptians and Israelis, Russians and Americans, Cubans and Chileans apply this term of abuse to each other several times a day, and the word 'fascist' means something different to all of them. The refinements achieved by the addition of prefixes are already legion. There is pre-fascism and post-fascism, crypto-fascism and semi-fascism, monarcho-fascism and left-fascism. Most popular of all nowadays, however, is the expression '*Fashistoidismus*'—to discover a 'fascistoid behaviour pattern' or a 'fascistoid mode of behaviour' has become the world-wide hobby of sociologists, old and young.

In view of this disintegration of the term fascism, we must seriously ask ourselves whether it is still possible to use it in political discussions as a scientifically meaningful concept. It has obviously taken over today that place which 'communism' once held in Western society (and according to critics of this society ostensibly still holds): the position

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of the haunting spectre, of the synonym for evil *per se*, which there is no need to refute because it refutes itself by its sulphurous stench. So powerful has the extra-scientific, existential significance of the term 'fascism' become that even those who actually see themselves as the 'total negation' of existing society and as its 'spectre' draw back from the label 'fascist'. It is well known that they were deeply hurt by Habermas's verdict, and all relations between them and the Frankfurt philosopher have since then been severed.

As for the social scientists, they have till now practised a remarkable abstinence as far as gaining an understanding of the structural impulses of the fascist phenomenon is concerned. In the 1920s Karl Mannheim described the fascist political type as a basic one in modern society, clearly differentiating it both from the conservative and from the socialist-Marxist type; but this sociological excursus was submerged in the flood of apologetic or polemical literature appearing at that time; and in the years following 1945—after the movements and regimes openly designating themselves as fascist had been burnt to the ground—writers contented themselves with merely describing events, thus leaving the field to the historians. The historical approach culminated three years ago in Ernst Nolte's book *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche*,[1] which sought to confine the phenomenon within narrow temporal limits, roughly between the dates 1917 and 1945.

The Marxists alone tried from the outset to incorporate fascism in their *Weltanschauung* as a structural impulse of society, precisely because it did not really fit into it and reduced a whole series of revered Marxist predictions to absurdity. But the analyses undertaken by communist and left-wing socialist theoreticians suffered not merely from a dogmatism that failed to come to grips with reality, but above all from the competitive position in which they found themselves. For both communism and fascism were advertising themselves as instruments for overcoming liberal-capitalistic society and its parliamentary state form. Therefore each side was compelled to try and prove that the other was pursuing its aims in appearance only and in reality was striving to buttress the capitalist system. Thus, while the fascists denounced 'Moscow' as the lackey of the 'Jewish world plutocracy', the communists defined Hitler and Mussolini as myrmidons of 'the most aggressive section of the nationalist big bourgeoisie' and so on.

TO the objective observer, however, there can be no doubt as to the sincerity of the desire, vigorously expressed by both parties, to make an end of the liberal era and its style of life. If there are points of agreement between communism and fascism they lie precisely in this common starting-point. Both movements are movements of opposition to the bourgeois society that developed so powerfully during the 19th century, as is evidenced by the fact that after the First World War they

[1] Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965).

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were at first only able to establish themselves on the fringes of this society—in Russia and Italy, countries in which 'Western' influence was only sufficient to stir up the indigenous forces of defence against its inroads. The fact that Germany then became for 12 years the centre of fascism (a very much modified form of fascism) is attributed by many historians to the lost war and the unhappy economic circumstances. 'Bolshevism and fascism', Clemenceau remarked sarcastically, 'are diseases of defeat'.

But they are different, distinguishable diseases. Fascism, so to speak, attacks the limbs of bourgeois society; communism is more like a disease of the brain. In less metaphorical terms: whereas communism, by its nature, seizes upon and over-intensifies the tendencies towards the 'scientific planning' of life, towards bureaucracy, abstraction and a total planned economy—tendencies that are always present in society—fascism links up with the tendencies towards spontaneity, anarchy and total competitive warfare, which are likewise latently at work in capitalism. Its activist emotionalism, its glorification of 'direct action' do not, indeed, exclude theory. But so far as possible they reduce it to the simple question: '*How can I make a revolution?*' Fascist theoreticians tend to operate with a few philosophical and sociological constants; they hate details and shy away from the formation of new concepts.

At a very early age the co-existence and rivalry of Bureaucracy and Activism in the critique of capitalism could be clearly distinguished. The conflict between Marx and Bakunin faithfully mirrors it, and later the everlasting quarrels between the German Social Democrats and the Syndicalists of the Latin countries. Often, of course, the two movements overlapped; indeed it is probable that a fundamental mingling of the two principles was necessary before capitalism could be overthrown. After all, both Lenin and Mussolini only came to power after breaking with Social Democracy and either casting off traditional Marxism or enriching it with a powerful shot of Sorelian activism.

The victory of Lenin and Mussolini must not, however, blind us to the vehement resistance which Western industrial society offered to its attackers. It smashed European fascism so utterly that it was reduced once and for all to an un-thing. But, thanks to its enormous productive capacity, it declared communism to be virtually a pre-industrial enterprise. In the fiftieth year of Lenin's revolution (which, let it be said in passing, was not followed by any other similar revolution) Russia draws all its—overt and covert—models from the West. It wants to become like the West, it wants to 'catch up' with it—and yet can manifestly only guarantee its citizens prosperity and civil liberties approximately equal to those of present-day Greece. For its part, the West has not merely salvaged a large measure of individual freedom in respect of pluralism and private-economic flexibility within the present age of masses, it has also finally carried its life-style beyond the frontiers of Europe and made all the nations aware of it as an alternative.

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As after the First World War in Russia, Italy, and Germany, so today in the countries of the 'third world' the struggle is raging for the acceptance or rejection of this life-style, and as then within the 'proletarian nations of Europe' (to use Ernst Niekisch's phrase), so today in China, Africa, and Latin America, fascism and communism advertise themselves as ideologies of anti-Western revolution. And it is at least worth wondering whether the fact that fascism was defeated, whereas communism was able to assert itself, has not significantly redounded to the advantage of the Soviet ideology.

To be sure, European fascism's descent into Hell was so infernal that no one wants to raise this corpse from the dead. But let us not deceive ourselves. It is not fascism's brutalities that discredit it in the eyes of many of today's revolutionaries, but its defeat. Europe suffers over the millions of murdered Jews. But in Cairo, horrifyingly, they already think quite differently about it, and in the Congo, for example, the European past is a matter of utter indifference. On the other hand, the comfort-loving presence of the ostensibly revolutionary Soviet Union is bound to appear suspect to these people. The more economic successes the Soviets nail to their standard, the more often they 'catch up' and 'overtake' the West, the more 'bourgeois' they must necessarily look to the new revolutionaries. From Mao Tse-tung's viewpoint it is only logical to vilify Russia as an accomplice of the United States, from whom all that can be learnt is how to betray one's friends.

Many revolutionary movements in the 'third world' already have a distinct anti-Soviet bias. Are they therefore fascist? Are the activities of the Red Guard in China a variant of fascism? Are Régis Debray's theories of guerrilla warfare a series of fascist theorems? Is Black Power a fascist movement? Was Franz Fanon, the late advocate of violent resistance to civilization, a fascist? Such questions derive their topicality from the special events of the last two years, which were dominated by violence and during which attempts were made here and there to free the various revolutionary theories from their local limitation and fuse them into a world-wide 'Theory of the Third Revolution'. Does this 'third revolution' mean the fascist revolution?

THE first thing that strikes us is that the 'material basis' of the 'third revolution', according to its prophets (Mao, Debray, Marcuse), is *not* to be the industrial workers as was still the case in the communist revolution. The industrial workers are said to have long since become 'part and parcel of bourgeois society' and to be participating to a considerable extent in the *Sozialprodukt*. Hence they are out of the running as a vehicle of insurrection. Their place must be taken by the petty bourgeoisie, and above all the peasants of the open country. The peasantry, as Franz Fanon passionately asserted, are not yet 'ruined by the city'; in them slumber the mighty forces of the people waiting to be awakened. With Lin Piao this conviction is expanded into a

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global strategic concept: the capitalist West is comparable to a metropolis surrounded by the open country of the 'third world'. True, the peasants of the open country could not yet, at this moment, storm the walls of the city, but they can already start to build a close-knit ring round it and starve it out.

That such theorems have a fascist flavour is clear even to undiscriminating minds, especially as the glorification of the 'People' which they contain is counterbalanced by the ice-cold contempt which the new revolutionaries feel for the 'masses'. The 'masses'—particularly in their bourgeois shape as 'consumers' and 'herds of voters'—are 'not autonomous'; they are 'asleep'; they are in any case 'manipulatable'. Consequently men like Stokely Carmichael or Rap Brown stake everything on bringing the methods of manipulation, of oratorical seduction, to the highest pitch of perfection. The 'third revolution' has very quickly produced demagogues whose unrestrained language could not have been surpassed even by Hitler.

The new revolutionaries have a marked *élite* consciousness, and it always culminates in a typically fascist cult of personality. Even if we interpret many of the phenomena involved in the deification of 'Chairman Mao' as deriving from the specifically Chinese tradition, the cult of the '*Maximo*' leader of Havana or the '*Rais*' of Cairo is scarcely less intense in the countries concerned than the cult of Mao. And the veil of charisma is woven as a matter of course even round revolutionary leaders who are still far from power. Régis Debray says of Che Guevara: 'He is a saint! If he had lived in the Middle Ages he would have been a second Francis of Assisi. . . .'

Thus one thing comes to the other. Debray's adolescent *pistolero* romanticism is paralleled by the Italian blackshirts' *vivere pericolosamente*. The pathos with which the 'third revolution' presents itself as a 'revolution of youth' is no more new than Fanon's burning race hatred or his unbounded worship of force. In these circles the law of the jungle is once more being preached in unvarnished terms. Social consensus is said to be nothing but 'a rule of the game' that can be renounced at will. Against one's opponent everything is permitted. The rule is total enmity. There is only unconditional surrender.

Characteristic is the metamorphosis which the old Trotskyist thesis of 'Permanent Revolution' has undergone at the hands of the Maoists. Originally it related to a particular phase of Soviet history and reflected the embarrassment among the old Bolshevik functionaries when other revolutions failed to take place after October 1917. Since Mao's 'Great Socialist Cultural Revolution', however, this same old Trotskyist thesis has proved its worth in connexion with the formation of squads of young people subject to the 'direct orders of the leader' and ready if need be to act 'in direct defence of his person'. It is difficult not to be reminded of the *SS*. As in the days of the '*Schutzstaffel des Führers*', so now the 'Red Guards' stand in clear competition with the regular

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power of the state. Like the former, they are evolving their own code of conduct (which runs counter to the laws of the state), and are taking over executive functions on the strength of their own overwhelming power.

It was in *SS* terrorism that the fascist regime found its purest expression. That the theories of the 'third revolution' should end in the justification of institutions which unquestionably have more in common with Hitler's *SS* than with the old party in the classical Marxist style completes the circle. The warning against a 'left-wing fascism' among the Berlin *SDS* by the old-style Marxist Habermas, with which we started, was by no means a warning shot into the blue; it indicated rather a real trend among left-wing radicals in Western Germany, and not only there.

For the time being, of course, the numerous expressions of support for Mao, Castro, and Nasser from academic quarters look highly unrealistic. The activists of direct action lack not only the 'mass basis', they also utterly lack the arena within which they could carry out meaningful political operations. The West German *Bundesrepublik* is neither an underdeveloped country nor are there within its frontiers any social or racial minorities that are oppressed or consciously underprivileged. Hence the 'mandate' to which every politically active person has to appeal, and which the left-fascists could receive only from such minorities, if at all, is simply not obtainable in Germany.

This has led to the curious situation that German radicals take over their 'mandate' as a kind of export article. They speak 'in the name of the Vietcong', 'in the name of the third world', 'in the name of the exploited comrades in the copper mines of Bolivia', and as though to reduce the whole situation to absurdity it frequently transpires that the involuntary mandate-givers are not interested in allies from the 'Western exploiting countries'. When romantic European revolutionaries crowded in homage round Stokely Carmichael, the guest of honour at the Dialectics of Liberation congress at the Roundhouse in London, they found themselves condemned by him as fundamentally nothing but a lot of white-skinned devils.

All in all, the position of the left-wing students in the Federal Republic is one of tragi-comic helplessness. For society, this is no reason for scorn or complacency. On the contrary, the helpless, confused hatred with which the members of a generation that only knows democratic parliamentary conditions speak of precisely these conditions, the skill with which they seek to render this system ridiculous or incapable of functioning, without saying what they themselves really want, ought to be disturbing. Here an anti-constitutional energy is growing which in the future may express itself in the most unexpected manner, and discharge itself in the most unlikely direction. For he who has no programme can ultimately fit into any programme.

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International Communism

BUDAPEST TO MOSCOW

Roger Salloch

ARITHMETICALLY, the gathering at Budapest's Hotel Gellert was impressive. On 26 February 1968 the Soviet Union and its supporters had at last managed to convene a preparatory conference of most of the world's communist parties.

But three years of consultations, and the deliberations at the conference itself, revealed that such a meeting meant many things to many parties. Hostile groups suggested that the CPSU would use the conference to re-establish its authority over other communist parties. Milder opponents feared that it would only erect another barrier to conciliation between warring factions of the world movement. Champions of the conference, on the other hand, viewed it as a symbolic way of reaffirming world communist solidarity. Hesitant supporters admitted that it might finally provide an opportunity to establish greater political co-operation among parties in their anti-imperialist struggle.

When the meeting adjourned, it was proclaimed a success because it had laid the foundation for a final international conference to be held in Moscow in the late autumn. Yet differences among parties had not been resolved. Nor did the conference suggest that the movement as a whole could respond to the underlying causes of tensions between parties.

THE Soviet Union's tactical success in convening the Budapest meeting can be traced to a change in the Soviet approach to communist unity which first became apparent at the March 1965 consultative meeting. International conferences, the communiqué noted, were an 'excellent form of international solidarity', but 'careful preparation' and preliminary meetings were envisaged as necessary before a final meeting could be called. More important, it said: 'A comradely exchange of opinions on the considerations advanced in the communiqué, collective methods for implementing them and joint practical actions in the common struggle constitute a reliable path towards the consolidation of the communist movement on the principles of Marxism-Leninism.'[1]

The statement was an echo of the advice which Palmiro Togliatti had proffered in his Yalta Memorandum of September 1964. The Chinese deviation, Togliatti said, represented a problem for all communist parties, but one which should be combated with 'deeds, not

[1] *Pravda*, 12 March 1965.

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just words; . . . the terrain on which it is most easy to defeat them is that of the judgment of the concrete situation facing us today'.[2]

The Vietnamese war was the most critical problem which the international movement faced, and it was consequently on this issue that the Soviet Union first tried to develop a programme of 'consolidation of the communist movement' by building on 'joint practical actions'. But an apparent April proposal for a tri-party summit conference on Vietnam comprising China, North Vietnam, and the Soviet Union was rejected by the Chinese. Brezhnev and Kosygin, as the March meeting indicated, had dropped Khrushchev's strategy of using the conference issue to provoke a showdown with the Chinese.[3] But in this new demonstration of Chinese intransigence they found their own effective tool for isolating the CCP. At the March meeting 'unity of action' had been a general formulation; by June it had acquired a distinct polemical edge. A major *Pravda* editorial of 20 June 1965 stated bluntly that 'joint actions are dictated not only by the requirements of the struggle for socialism, against the common enemy, but also by the international requirements of the communist movement'. The 'but also' effectively excluded the Chinese from participation.

POSSESSING a tool and using it well are, however, two different matters. Should 'unity of action' be used to promote a conference or not? To determine the answer, innumerable bilateral meetings were held over the next year-and-a-half, notably with the east European parties. These culminated in somewhat anti-climactic fashion in the October 1966 summit of Warsaw Pact allies, Cuba, and Mongolia. Although since August the Soviets had again stepped up their anti-Chinese propaganda, statements issued in connexion with the meeting stayed away from the substantive problems of the international movement and suggested simply that 'friendly consultations' had been held on a variety of topics. The meeting seemed to establish that a give-and-take process had grown in policy formulation among communist parties. Having thereby reassured those parties hostile to reassertions of Soviet hegemony, the CPSU decided that a conference might once again attract sufficient supporters to make it worth while.

Accordingly, at the Bulgarian and Hungarian Party Congresses in November 1966 the issue was reopened. Conditions for the convocation of an international conference were said to be 'ripening'. At the Hungarian Congress Brezhnev and Kadar made it plain that 'consultation' would be the keynote of any conference. 'Excommunication' of a party, Brezhnev was careful to state, would not be on the agenda.

During the spring and summer of 1967 the CPSU was to find a

[2] Kevin Devlin, 'The Conference Issue, Commitment or Consensus', *Problems of Communism*, January 1967. Togliatti's Memorandum appeared in English in the *New York Times*, 5 September 1964.

[3] See Edward Crankshaw, *The Observer*, 14 November 1965, for the exchange of letters between the CCP and CPSU on this issue.

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unity bud on every conference bush. The Rumanians along with several west European parties did not attend the Karlovy Vary meeting of European communist parties in April. The communiqué issued from that meeting was a fairly abstract reaffirmation of the parties' belief in the importance of European security and of the threats posed to it by the West. Nevertheless *Pravda* praised the conference for setting 'the world communist movement an example of the way of achieving unity and agreement on joint actions in the diverse specific conditions in which the national movements are working'.[4]

THE Middle East crisis provided Moscow with an excellent opportunity to infuse substance into its 'unity of action' thesis. Barely more than one month after hostilities ended, two major meetings of ruling communist parties were held, the first in Moscow, the next in Budapest. Both were devoted to 'the concrete problem' of the Middle East. Moreover, Yugoslavia was a participant at both of them, marking the first time in a decade that she took part in a collective communist council. As such she provided a counter-weight to the Rumanians, who refused to sign the communiqué from the first meeting and simply did not attend the second.

In spite of the Rumanians Moscow sought to use the Middle East crisis to reassert the continuity of her efforts to build communist unity. The 'unity of action', it developed, was but a new phase of an old project. After the Budapest Middle East meeting, a *Pravda* (23 July 1967) editorial said that it was the 'collective efforts of fraternal parties which firmly adhere to the general line of the communist movement' which would pave the way to another international conference.

An underlying purpose of such formulations must have been to control the Rumanian contagion. But it also permitted Moscow to stake out a clear bargaining position. Her willingness to compromise would ultimately only show itself at Budapest. But her negotiations on the conference issue with independently minded parties, from November 1967 to February 1968, proved that Moscow was willing to be quite flexible—at least on paper—on the commitments she proposed to seek at Budapest. By the end of the maelstrom of bilateral meetings which preceded the preparatory conference itself, Moscow's proposals on the projected shape and content of the meeting seemed mild indeed. A *Pravda* editorial of 21 February 1968 reassured its world-wide audience that there could be no question of re-establishing a single centre of the world movement, recognized the independence of each party as 'an unalterable principle of our movement', and did not even mention China.

[4] *Pravda*, 27 April 1967. Peking was less cheerful. In an article entitled 'The Bankruptcy of Europe's New Scabs' she accused the CPSU of trying 'to knock together' an assembly of all the 'renegades and scabs of the world'. But 'contrary to their hopes, the baton of Soviet revisionism became still less effective' (*People's Daily*, 4 May 1967).

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At this stage Moscow's primary goal was simply to gather as many parties in Budapest as she could. The length of the roll-call, she felt, would itself speak for her ability to rally the world's communist fraternity in defiance of imperialism and in support of their international unity.

SOON after the conference began it became evident that its conclusions would be formulated *ex cathedra*. The Soviet Union was indeed the guiding spirit behind this meeting. If the permitted limits of debate at the conference were broader than at the last, the objectives themselves did not seem to have changed radically.

Thirteen of the parties in attendance at the last world conference were absent this time. They were Albania, Burma, China, Cuba, Indonesia, Japan, Malaya, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Korea, North Vietnam, Sweden, and Thailand. Six of these are ruling parties, their absence a physical negation of the thread of continuity which inviting only the 1960 participants seemed to provide between Budapest and its antecedents. But whatever the surface appearance, it was 'continuity' which the Soviet Union sought to emphasize in shaping the meeting's deliberations.

The Soviet delegate, Mikhail Suslov, addressed the conference on 27 February, the first working day of proceedings. If the merits of holding an international conference were to have been discussed at Budapest, as the Rumanians had suggested, Suslov saw no reason for lengthy deliberation. The convening of the Budapest conference was itself 'patent proof of the determination of fraternal parties to convene a new international conference'.[5]

For the CPSU, Suslov indicated, such a conference would reaffirm the movement's strength of purpose in the face of 'serious differences' which had emerged among some parties 'on cardinal problems of revolutionary struggle'. The way to overcome such differences lay in reaffirmation of old principles. While the 1957 and 1960 documents could no longer be held as valid in 'every single letter', the CPSU 'has been and will be loyal to the general line of the international communist movement formulated in these documents'. The 'main document' which the conference should draw up would, of course, contain political conclusions, but 'it is important in principle for [it] to express clearly the ideological direction of the communist movement'.

This was necessary, Suslov explained, because 'Dangerous nationalistic tendencies [have] appeared in separate links of the communist movement'. Consolidation of the principles of proletarian internationalism at a conference would enable the communist parties to 'demonstrate their striving to combine national and international tasks in their activities' and thus strike 'a serious blow at the anti-communist reaction that is trying to use the ideology of nationalism to split our ranks'.

[5] This and further Soviet quotations from TASS, 28 February 1968.

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Nationalism in any form remained an alien phenomenon. And on these grounds the Chinese were roundly criticized for their refusal to join co-operative efforts in the struggle against imperialism. Yet from Suslov's remarks one may also infer that this struggle was not to get out of hand. He did not refer to Italian and Rumanian requests that 'progressive forces be included' at the next conference. And he took care to single out the Soviet policy of 'peaceful co-existence' as 'an important form of struggle against imperialism'. At the same time, he noted, 'there is only one political movement . . . which is doing everything to rally progressive forces to repulse the imperialist policy of plunder, violence and war. This is the communist movement.' Was there any doubt that the strength of the anti-imperialist struggle could best be fostered by an international conference of communist parties?

Nothing in Suslov's speech indicated that the CPSU had lost its interest in promoting unity simply to further its own political ends. Pre-conference deliberations had suggested that all parties were now equal before the law; but at Budapest the CPSU made plain that it still thought the final court of appeal was in Moscow.

AFTER Suslov spoke, Paul Niculescu-Mizil gave the Rumanian brief for the opposition. There was barely one point on which he expressed agreement with the opinions voiced by Suslov. Their speeches proceeded on almost entirely different planes. Suslov dealt in theory, Mizil in the practical politics of the conference. When Mizil did venture into the realm of theory, it was to deny roundly the very foundation of Suslov's abstractions. Mizil argued:

> Each international conference is a separate, independent manifestation, and to conceive of international conferences as having a certain succession and membership would mean to attribute to them the character of sessions of an organized body.[6]

Scepticism was the keynote of Mizil's speech. The Rumanians, he complained, had not been consulted before an announcement of the conference was made and had learned about the plan to hold the Budapest meeting from Western newspapers. 'Such a procedure putting before parties a *fait accompli* does not seem natural to us, it does not serve rapprochement and understanding, it can only add new elements of reserve towards the conference.' Such reserve had been enhanced by the unwarranted decision to base the delegate list at Budapest on the 1960 roll-call, an act which had repeated discrimination against Yugoslavia. Similar tactics should be avoided in the future; not only Yugoslavia but both factions of the split Israeli and Indian parties should be invited to the final conference. Moreover, a primary goal of the Budapest meeting should be to determine ways in which the missing parties, notably those from Asia, could be convinced to attend the international summit. For a conference at which 'nearly half of

[6] This and following Rumanian quotations from *Agerpres*, 29 February 1968.

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the number of socialist countries [were] absent . . . could in no way be a demonstration of [their] unity'.

'We consider', said Mizil, 'that it is on the manner in which this consultative meeting unfolds that the whole subsequent progress of the preparations for a conference depends. . . .' Certainly to avoid furthering dissension it was important that the agenda be set to cover those problems on which 'joint conclusions can be reached'. Discussion of ideological differences could serve no positive purpose. Even more basically, the policies of other parties should suffer no criticism at the conference; Mizil expressed 'deep regret . . . over the fact that at this very consultative meeting the policy of a fraternal party has been discussed'.

AT the close of the first working day of the conference, Mizil's speech still represented a counterbalance to the main thrust of the Soviet argument. Zenon Kliszko, the Polish delegate, had generally supported the Soviet proposals for the final conference, devoting a major portion of his speech to arguments against the 'elimination of all controversial matters and even only debatable ones'.[7] Supporting Soviet objectives, Kliszko stated: 'the attitude towards peaceful coexistence, if it gives rise to differences of views, should be the subject of discussion in the international forum. . .'. Nevertheless, he was hesitant in underwriting the complete control of international policy which implementation of Suslov's remarks would have given the CPSU.

Referring to 'several documents' which an international conference should adopt, Kliszko said that one could not hope to get unanimous approval of all formulated points. Parties abstaining 'should have a right to a public justification of their position. Even if any party should decide that all the resolutions of the conference are not to its liking, it should have the right to present its separate view in a separate document'. A trace of caution had flickered again, briefly.

Yet it was only a thin crack in the wall of agreement built around Suslov's speech. On the third day of proceedings, the will of the conference, as defined by Suslov, received added backing. Fears among the 'evolutionary' parties of Soviet 'steamroller' tactics were reinforced by the speech of the leader of the East German delegation, Erich Honecker.

The SED, he stated, supported the general line of the communist movement and felt that loyalty to the USSR and the CPSU was a yardstick of a party's adherence to Marxism-Leninism. 'Whoever turns against close co-operation with the CPSU thereby weakens his own position and the position of our entire movement.'[8]

[7] *Trybuna Ludu*, 1 March 1968.

[8] ADN, 2 February 1968. In a commentary on the speech that evening, Prague Radio stated that the address had created a 'certain astonishment' at Budapest. The speech was said to have created the impression that it 'would have been more appropriate and more comprehensible eight years ago'.

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Almost all of the conditions which Rumania had set on its participation at Budapest had now been transgressed. Fraternal parties had been criticized, it had been assumed without discussion that a world conference was the best way to ensure communist unity, Moscow continued to loom large on the horizon as an implicit centre of the movement. When Khaled Bagdash, head of the Syrian Communist Party, launched into a bitter diatribe against the Rumanians for their pro-Israeli policy and chauvinistic tendencies, the Rumanians decided they had had enough. On the next day their decision to leave the conference was announced.

The sequence of events which led to the final Rumanian withdrawal can only be summarized here.[9] Having protested against Bagdash's statements and secured their removal from the record, the Rumanian delegation seems to have considered the incident closed. But that evening they telephoned Bucharest for direct consultations with Ceausescu. The following morning, Mizil reopened the issue, presenting the delegates with a basic choice; either the entire conference would dissociate itself from the Bagdash attack and assert its collective intention not to allow further criticism of fraternal parties, or the Rumanians would leave the meeting. An effort led by the Finnish delegation to persuade the Rumanians to compromise was to no avail. The conference rejected the proposal and the Rumanians, after a brief statement by Mizil, walked out.

As a later Central Committee communiqué made clear the Rumanians felt that Budapest had not only jeopardized their policies but also their principles and the unity of the movement. 'Further participation in the Budapest consultative session would signify acceptance of the promotion of practices and methods of condemning other parties, of imposing the will of some parties on other parties, practices which seriously harm the efforts for the normalization of relations between parties. . . .'[10] If the Rumanians could not sell their policy at Budapest they were determined to highlight the dangers of a closed market.

AMONG the remaining east European parties, the Bulgarian delegation reiterated the Soviet line, but both Hungary and Czechoslovakia distanced themselves to a degree from the CPSU.

Zoltan Komoscin said that the Hungarian Party 'identifies itself with [the 1957 and 1960 documents] and regards them as the basis of its international activity',[11] although 'in some respects' they were admittedly out of date. But he further added that 'it is the right of every party to decide whether or not to participate in the international conference' and was later careful to remark that Hungarian state and Party relations with Rumania would not be affected by her precipitate departure from Budapest.

[9] See Donald R. Shanor, 'Exit in Budapest', *New Leader*, 11 March 1968.
[10] *Agerpres*, 3 March 1968.
[11] MTI, 2 March 1968.

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Vladimir Koucky, later demoted, but then still speaking for the new regime in Prague, displayed a reticence in seconding Soviet proposals which could only be seen as protection for an as yet inchoate Czechoslovak 'internationalist' position. Chinese policies were criticized, but mildly, and it was admitted that problems of the movement stressed 'the need for consultations and unification on questions which cannot be judged or solved only on a national scale'.[12] But Koucky also firmly stated that earlier conference documents 'no longer fully reflect the complexity of the various processes in the world', and called attention to their 'incorrect passages' on the Yugoslav League of Communists. Most important, Koucky warned against adoption at a conference of a single document, an act 'fraught with the danger that every change in the situation and in the attitude on some subsidiary questions might automatically raise doubts about the validity of the document'. 'Several political resolutions' based on an analysis of individual phenomena should instead be formulated.

Coming as it did from the formerly 'centralist' Czechoslovaks, this strong hint at the effect which future change might have on tightly conceived forms of unity was perhaps the most revealing comment made at Budapest. Hardened opposition to the forces of change, Koucky suggested, would provide at best a temporary expedient for overcoming division with the movement. By keeping to common political objectives, a sense of unity could be derived which had its own dynamic and could keep pace with change within and among the communist parties.

Except for the emphasis noted above, the French delegation repeated most of the Czechoslovak arguments, giving their support for the inclusion of the Yugoslav Party at the next meeting. They were, however, stronger in their criticism of the Chinese, fearing 'scissionist efforts which are aimed at our Party and which are exclusively the doing of the Chinese Party leaders'.[13]

While the Italians were not in a position to walk out at Budapest—they themselves had urged that the Chinese be politically but not ideologically criticized—once the Rumanians left, they set themselves on the periphery of the conference. The reasons for their displeasure were obvious. PCI delegate Enrico Berlinguer had insisted that since many communist parties were not going to attend any kind of meeting, 'the participation of other forces, non-communist but revolutionary, could contribute to tying the conference to national and continental realities of the most diverse kind. . .' .[14] But most of the delegates made it plain that they felt such a world council would be suitable only if it took place after the communist parties had themselves met. To the PCI this was simply a way of reaffirming 'old forms of unity' which put the 'political objectives' of the movement in a questionable light.

[12] *Rude pravo*, 2 March 1968.
[13] *L'Humanité*, 29 February 1968.
[14] *Rinascita*, 8 March 1968.

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As a result Berlinguer stressed that many more meetings, in fact another preparatory conference, would have to be held if the final international gathering was to produce more than *pro forma* appeals for unity.

PCI suggestions that another consultative conference be held were echoed by the Spanish and Portuguese Parties. Similarly it was the west European parties which formed the vanguard of those seeking to limit discussions to the struggle against imperialism. The British Party was particularly outspoken on this score (and along with the Italians urged that all conference deliberations be held open to the public).

As could be expected the Latin American parties were firm in their support of Soviet propositions. The Argentine, Bolivian and Colombian Parties all supported a wide agenda for conference discussions. Cuba was attacked by the Venezuelan CP for its interference in her own affairs, and Peru criticized the Cubans implicitly by stating that ersatz revolutionary organizations could not fulfil the role of communist parties.

THE final communiqué was in one sense a compromise. Italian proposals were largely ignored—and Rumania was not even listed as having been among the participants. But those parties which had hoped that ways would be sought to create 'a new system of organization of relations among the communist parties', such as creation of 'an organ which would assure [their] international relations, regular consultation and reciprocity of information',[15] were disappointed. A preparatory commission was set up but was to operate only during the pre-conference period. An earlier proposal by Gus Hall of the United States, urging that a communist information centre be established, received no further endorsement.

The communiqué established that a conference would be held in Moscow in November or December 1968. Its agenda was to consist of a single question: 'The tasks of the fight against imperialism in the present phase and the unity of action of the communist and workers' parties, as well as all anti-imperialist forces.'[16] But this was not a single question. It was a portmanteau formulation which covered all the issues debated at Budapest. Insurance was thus provided that the CPSU, with the support of its 'arithmetic majority', would be able to promote Suslov's arguments during the preparatory work. More important, it guaranteed that there would be no self-imposed limits when the parties met for their final confrontation in Moscow in the fall.

AGREEMENT among communist parties was achieved at Budapest —with one major exception—but at the expense of realism. It

[15] The words are those of the Tudeh Party of Iran, quoted by Michel Tatu, *Le Monde*, 1 March 1968. As this quotation and Bagdash's performance at the conference reveal, the Middle Eastern parties remain satrapies of the USSR. The rise of nationalist-socialist parties in the Middle East like the Ba'ath in Syria has meant that the Arab communist parties, if nationalistic in the face of Israel, have without domestic support been unwilling to loosen their ties with the USSR.

[16] MTI, 5 March 1968.

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was unfortunate for the conference advocates that the tumult of events in eastern Europe should have coincided with its sessions. Budapest's reaffirmation of the desire of communist parties for international unity paled before national developments in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The permanence of 'the spirit of Budapest' was reflected three weeks later when East German Politbureau member Kurt Hager criticized Czechoslovak internal developments, saying they were part of a West German attempt to drive a wedge between the socialist countries. He singled out the leading Czechoslovak reformer, Josef Smrkovsky (now the new President of the Czechoslovak National Assembly), for a personal attack. All too clearly the continuum of 'world socialist solidarity' which the CPSU sought to reinforce at Budapest was only a thread in a broader pattern of historical change.

Budapest's opening session may, in fact, come to serve as a high-water mark of communist unity. For it is difficult to see how the coming months can enhance possibilities of success for the Moscow summit as presently conceived. This impression has already been reinforced by the results of the first session of the preparatory commission which met in Budapest from 24 to 28 April. It did take one step towards the international conference by announcing that it would be convened on 25 November. But to judge from the limited evidence available, that was its sole achievement.

Only fifty-four parties attended the working session. Some February participants were now absent for simple transportation reasons, but others, it was clear, stayed away on political and ideological grounds. Having attended the February meeting in an 'observer' capacity, neither the Norwegian nor the Icelandic Party was present in April. After the consultative conference they realized that further participation might threaten the stability between Party factions which their ideological neutrality on Sino-Soviet issues provided.[17] Among the numerous Latin American absentees, the Dominican Communist Party was also probably influenced by ideological considerations in not attending the working session. Since February, while declaring its independence from pro-Chinese or pro-Soviet groups, the Dominican Party has become an increasingly strong supporter of Castro.[18] The constricting framework imposed on communist unity by the first Budapest conference clearly leaves little room for any Fidelist modification of ideology or political goals.

More important, although they were not invited, the Yugoslavs

[17] According to *Morgunbladid*, 3 March 1968, the newspaper of Iceland's Independence Party, Iceland should not even have been represented at the February meeting in an 'observer' capacity. The Executive Committee of the Communist Party had decided that its Chairman, Einar Olgeirsson, should attend the meeting only if the Swedish communists sent a representative. Olgeirsson went even though the Swedes announced they would not go, and he was subsequently censured by the Reykjavik section of the Party.

[18] See *Granma*, 2 February 1968, which reprints a statement to this effect from the Dominican Party organ, *El Popular*.

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remained adamant in their opposition to the conference and did not attend the working session. They objected that 'progressive' non-communist forces had still not been invited, and stated that it was apparent that several parties still approved of the 1957 and 1960 conference condemnations of the League of Yugoslav Communists.[19] The Rumanians were also not prepared to forgive and forget. They announced that the only condition upon which they would attend any further conference sessions was that there be a publicly made agreement that 'the internal and international policy of any party, whether it be present at the meetings or not, will not be brought into discussion'.[20] Such an agreement was not forthcoming before the April session, and the Rumanians stayed at home. In the light of the renewed vigour with which the CPSU had recently been attacking the Chinese, there is little likelihood that the Rumanian demand will be met before 25 November.

As for the parties which contributed their efforts to the April working session, the communiqué made it plain that little agreement on substantive issues had been reached. It did not say that the meeting had produced greater possibilities for strengthening unity; it noted simply that debates had been carried on in 'an atmosphere of a comradely and free exchange of views'.[21] Problems such as that of inviting both factions of the Indian and Israeli Communist Parties were swept under the rug.

The Czechoslovak contribution to the working session was the only party statement made public. It was a strong reminder that while the February session may have established a core of Soviet supporters, that core still had a sensitive outer edge. Jozef Lenart, the Czechoslovak delegate, elaborated considerably on the position assumed by Koucky at the February meeting: the conference should be public; it was not an end in itself but should be used as a platform on which to build a broader conference of all 'anti-imperialist' forces; there should be no doctrinal assessment of the problems confronting the movement. Above all, Lenart urged, the conference planners must work to include those parties absent from sessions to date and adapt their decisions accordingly rather than seek to tighten unity among a limited number of parties.[22]

The Czechoslovak Party is now at odds with the CPSU on almost all important conference points—the brief and very vague communiqué[23] from the Moscow 8 May summit meeting of Polish, East

[19] Tanyug announced on 4 May that the Yugoslav Party had decided to turn down an invitation to participate in the Moscow international conference. In a letter to the Hungarian Party explaining the refusal, the League of Yugoslav Communists stated that it 'considers it harmful to the interests of the struggle for peace and progress to create an impression that the communists have some special interests in the anti-imperialist struggle and that they want to impose some special aims of their own on the other progressive and liberation forces. . . . The experience and results of earlier consultations should necessarily have been considered in a broader analysis so as to avoid a repetition of old mistakes since they strengthened the differences among the parties. . . .'

[20] Bucharest Radio, 26 April 1968.

[21] TASS, 29 April 1968.

[22] Ceteka, 25 April 1968.

[23] TASS, 9 May 1968.

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German, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Soviet leaders, revealed their inability to come to agreement on the Czechoslovak question. Their public reactions have so far ranged from Poland's and East Germany's negation of the whole conceptual basis of the Czechoslovak experiment, to mild Hungarian objections to the haste with which the reform is being implemented. In contrast, the warm communiqué issued after PCI leader Luigi Longo went to Prague,[24] giving Italian support to the 'process of renewal' in Czechoslovakia, indicates the growing gap between the west European non-ruling parties and the conservative regimes to the East. The community of attitudes between the PCI and Czechoslovakia may eventually attract other revisionist and national communist parties around a Rome-Prague axis, and pose serious obstacles to a Soviet-designed version of the international communist conference.

What are the present chances that the CPSU will try to effect a compromise between the dogmatists and revisionists of the communist movement before the Moscow meeting? Brezhnev's opening address in Moscow may relegate Suslov's Budapest speech to the archives of ideological history. But this is improbable. As was stressed at a Soviet Central Committee Plenum held in April (in the light of recent east European events), communist discipline and solidarity must be strengthened to answer 'the ideological infiltration of the enemy. . . .' The 'Summit' meeting of the five east European communist parties in Warsaw, convened in July to deal with 'the problem of Czechoslovakia' made it quite clear that retrenchment forms the order of the day. How it is to be achieved is another matter. Since the end of April the successive issues of *Kommunist* have been dealing with the Chinese challenge. They called on the entire communist and revolutionary movement to administer a 'collective rebuff' to Mao's foreign policies and said that the struggle to get China's Communist Party back on orthodox lines constitutes 'practical international aid to forces in China which remain loyal to Marxism-Leninism and Maoism'. There was another disturbing factor. The Polish *Trybuna Ludu* (14 July 1968) called for a 'firm rebuff' against 'reactionary forces' in Czechoslovakia. In this situation of 'left' and 'right' deviations rampant, Soviet plans for the Moscow meeting are bound to encounter considerable difficulties, or even be overtaken by events. Yet, whatever Moscow may do, other communist parties are uprooting old formulae in attempts to adapt their ideologies to modern realities. Yet the Soviet Union and its adherents do not seem to realize that the rest of the world, including many communist parties, does not want, or have time, to share their remembrance of things past.

[24] *L'Unita*, 8 May 1968.

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TEN WEEKS THAT SHOOK CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Fritz Beer

IN mid-February, five weeks after the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party had rid itself of its General Secretary, Antonin Novotny, and replaced him by Alexander Dubcek, a Slovak, Prague television showed one of those debates which had recently become increasingly popular. For years the great mass of the public had viewed these television debates with the customary cynical reserve which almost everyone had developed as a defence mechanism in order not to become depressed by the gulf between words and deeds. This gulf had for years been the dominant characteristic of almost all spheres of life. The world as presented in the press, radio, television, schools, Parliament, and factory meetings was non-existent. One could not encounter it in the street, the office or the factory, and it was particularly elusive when one went shopping or tried to get a television set repaired.

In the normal television programmes people talked a gobbledegook similar to the code used by the press, in which stereotyped formulae and ambiguous circumlocutions concealed any actual content in a cloud of unreality. When they spoke of 'an adjustment of prices' they actually meant that prices were going up; the phrase 'hunger for work' meant to threaten with unemployment; and when someone condemned 'economizing at the cost of the usefulness of the product' only the initiated knew that the production of shoddy goods was being criticized.

People in Czechoslovakia had, in fact, over the years developed acute hearing and second sight, had learned to read between the lines and to crack the code. Now they were waiting for a sign, however faint, that the 'new time' had actually begun. The political leaders who had forced the Stalinist Novotny out of his key position in the Party had, at the beginning of January, promised that from now on the deeds would correspond with the words. One would clear away the lies and the débris of the past, face the truth, and thus begin to build a more reasonable order of society. That sounded clear and straightforward and was thus a refreshing contrast to the past. But it was still only words. Novotny was still the President of the state and his supporters remained in their old posts in the ministries and right down to departments in the factories. No one could know whether the liberals would really succeed against the dogmatists. And as people had often burnt their fingers in the past, it was wiser to wait until things became clarified.

Then, too, the Party's programme of action, the blueprint for the promised democratization of society, was worked out behind locked doors. Leading politicians had, it was true, commented on it in the

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press, but why should one believe them when Novotny's representatives gave themselves out to be just as liberal as their opponents?

'Dear Comrades', wrote a woman reader to the trade union paper, *Prace*, 'Do explain to me what is going on. Is it all only the usual talk and the empty promises because an election is in the offing? And will everything afterwards be as it was before?'

Among the television audience watching the debates in mid-February there must have been a few hundred thousand watching who were as sceptical as this woman. But a few minutes after the discussion began they heard the chairman say: 'Excuse my stage fright, but this is the first time for 20 years that we have not filmed and edited a television debate beforehand. Of all that you say, not a single word can be retracted.' And what the participants then said was no longer in code or in time-worn formulae. Nor did their pronouncements contain the familiar alibis sticking out on every side. The discussion was clear and, for the first time for a long while, it was concrete. They spoke against pressure on opinion and high-power persuasion; they spoke for the independence of Parliament from the Party and for the rehabilitation of the victims of the past; they demanded the sacking of the numerous incompetent persons running business and public departments and their replacement by qualified people; the abolition of the censorship and the right of non-communist candidates to stand at all elections. Basically they all said the same thing: We demand a thorough democratization in all aspects of public life.

The following morning a camera team filmed the public's reactions to this debate. And that evening, on the television screen, a lorry driver could be heard saying to a reporter: 'Democratization? Are you all there? Answer the question yourself. Do you think I want to get myself locked up?'

This answer reflected the whole problem of the political situation in Czechoslovakia—so far only a relatively small group in society was seething with readiness to storm all the heights, to destroy old dogmas, seek new ways to express the truth and to reform the social system. The overwhelming majority of the population was distrustful, resigned, and biding its time. Between the reformers and the people lay the iceberg of the Establishment, roughly a quarter of a million of mostly unqualified people who after 1948 had been installed in leading positions because they had—to use the Party jargon—the 'right cadre profile'; in other words, they were politically reliable. Every reform laying emphasis on competence must threaten their positions and privileges.

THE reformers were thus faced with a complicated task. They had to overcome the gulf which went through all levels of the population without using the methods which had always hitherto characterized a change of leadership in a communist country—arrests and mass purges, the replacement of one power group by another without the

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participation of the people to whom the new leaders were as anonymous and faceless as the old ones. For in the past 20 years the reformers had seen that the collapse of the socialist vision which had taken them to power in 1948 was not due to the perversion of an originally valid theory of state and society. Their system was distorted, their power corrupted, their movement's moral aims tainted not because bad or immoral men had come to power, not because the Cold War siege psychosis had led to unnecessary distortions of socio-political functions, and certainly not—as people liked to sum it up in a phrase both all-embracing and meaningless—because the 'Leninist norms of Party work' had been suppressed under Stalin's influence. The reformers had perceived that there was a basic constructional failure in the system. The concept of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' contained a built-in tendency to accumulate uncontrolled power; internal corruption was thus inevitable because there was no counterbalancing political weight, no force, no inner impulse to regeneration. The new reforms would therefore fail in their aim if they were merely a plot carried through from above. They must convey to the people that what was going on was not a battle between cliques but a liberation of society from the Party's bureaucratic domination, an overcoming of everything associated in the popular mind with the idea of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

The most radical reformers and a group of young historians argued that the mistake from the beginning had been to imitate in Czechoslovakia the Soviet model of a proletarian dictatorship. In contrast to all other communist countries, Czechoslovakia had had a strong democratic tradition; even before the war there had been a large communist party which, in the free political debate of a bourgeois parliamentary democracy, had gained the support of a large part of the population; there was a skilled working class and a talented intelligentsia, which for historical reasons was liberal and progressive; and there had been, too, a highly developed heavy industry. It had therefore been unnecessary to create in industrial and state administration a rigid command structure like in Soviet Russia, to hold in check the great expansionary forces which would be released by the industrialization of a predominantly agricultural country.

Moderate reformers simply said that the Leninist principle of the 'leading role of the proletariat' had been wrongly applied; anyway, the era of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' had been outdated by the social development. In future all sections of the population, technicians, the intelligentsia, and collective farmers must take part in the conduct of the state in the same measure and with the same rights as the workers. To this end the entire state and economic structure must be reconstructed. Controls of and counterbalances to political power were necessary; the right to freedom and criticism must be officially established; the Communist Party's functions must be altered so that instead of commanding it would in future only lead by advising and by convincing through example and argument.

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THE January meeting of the Central Committee was not the first occasion to bring such ideas to the surface in internal political debates. For about five years Czechoslovakia had no longer been a totalitarian state. Although during the Novotny era destalinization had been carried out only hesitantly and incompletely (only 700 had been rehabilitated out of 40,000 victims of the 'personality cult'), fear had substantially disappeared from public life. When somebody knocked at the door in the morning it was the postman and no longer the secret police.

True, there was still a frequently exercised and very narrow-minded censorship, but despite that there was a surprising amount of criticism in literature, on the stage, in films, and in the two great literary periodicals. And although the official Party press stifled any genuine debate on decisive social problems, the former totalitarian uniformity had for some time been so loosened that new ideas and proposals for reform crept in from every angle.

In history one can never precisely detect which came first, the diminution of the terror or the increase in people's civil courage. They both influence each other. In Czechoslovakia the economic reformers, writers, film producers, lawyers and politicians had to bang their heads for years against the totalitarian apparatus of domination until they found cracks in it. Party secretaries, judges, censors, and managing editors stood firm for a generation against the attacks of the non-conformists, until the flood could no longer be checked.

Novotny's attempts to keep destalinization within bounds were doomed to failure in a nation possessing so much natural talent for undermining every type of law and boring through every barrier while avoiding direct conflict. In the end Schweik proved stronger than Stalin.

Novotny had abandoned the full extremes of the Stalinist method of domination because they inhibited the development of a complicated modern industrial state. His modified form of authoritarianism failed because it lacked the inner cohesion of totalitarian logic and totalitarian deterrence. One cannot publicly praise the principles of 'socialist justice' without running the risk that judges will take one seriously. In the long run one cannot present 'socialist culture as the highest expression of all human striving' without having impatient writers point out the discrepancy between the words and the reality. One cannot constantly argue that a socialist economy is superior to a capitalist one if the frontiers are no longer hermetically sealed and every visitor from the West, with his clothes, car, transistor set, and ballpoint pen, appears to prove the contrary.

THUS, when in 1967 the coalition (which was later to edge the Novotny group out of power) began to form, the will and the capacity of those in power to enforce conformity had already been eroded.

The first group in this coalition were the economic reformers

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surrounding Professor Ota Sik, who had for years been urging the liberalization of the economy. The economic reform started in January 1967 was only incompletely carried through. There was still no sufficient freedom and independence for industrial managers; the free market relations which, within the very wide limits of the areas of planning, were to replace the old centrally directed economy, had only been partially permitted; the price system was still unrealistic, and so on.

The slow start to reform had genuine economic causes, but the economic reformers were convinced that the decisive obstacle to a thorough liberalization of the economy was the Novotny group's fear that the Party's power monopoly would be undermined. How could one grant business leaders the power to make decisions, to dispose of profits, to decide the direction and the development of the economy, when in all spheres of life authoritarian policy repressed initiative and responsibility? The defeat of the conservative policy was for the economic reformers, the technologists, and the politicians associated with them the essential condition for economic reconstruction.

The second group opposing the conservative leaders were the intellectuals. Since the time of the national struggle against the Hapsburg monarchy, there has existed in Czechoslovakia a tradition in which the cultural life takes over those functions which are repressed by the lack of freedom in political spheres. In the last five years writers, film and stage producers, scientists and scholars had achieved an intellectual freedom in which one taboo after another was overturned. The 'cultural miracle' of this period, which brought Czechoslovakia so many international successes, was supported by wide circles of the population, for art in the profoundest sense of the word had become a 'moral institution', reflecting the hopes and fears of the population, the impotence of their unconquered past and the wilfulness of their rebellious present.

Concerned for the future of the hard-won freedom granted them, as it were, only on a 'word of honour', and which could be withdrawn at any time, the writers at their congress in 1967 demanded that it should be made official. 'We need stronger guarantees than the goodwill of the ruling circle', declared the writer Ludvik Vaculik, 'because with its monopoly power the regime can exclude whatever it regards as a foreign body.'

The Central Committee's representative at the Writers' Congress was the Party's dogmatic chief ideologist, Jiri Hendrych. To discredit the writers' demands and to represent them to the workers as 'class hostility', he described them as 'a foreign attempt at the ideological erosion of socialism' and he mobilized the hesitant Central Committee for a counter-blow.

The third important group contributing to Novotny's fall were the Slovaks. The far-reaching political and cultural autonomy which they had gained after the war in the so-called 'Kosice Programme' had been almost completely demolished under Novotny's political centralization.

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The Slovak opposition found in those who were out to reform the economy and in the radical intellectuals ready-made allies in the struggle against the Prague centralists and Novotny's conservative following. But this coalition could only make its influence felt in the Central Committee after a number of events in 1967 had undermined the authority and self-confidence of the conservatives.

THE first of these events was the popular reaction to the conflict in the Middle East. The pro-Arab attitude of the government found little or no echo in the country at large. For many people the story of their own country seemed very similar to that of 'little Israel'. Had they themselves not been encompassed by an overwhelming host of enemies in 1938? And did one not feel some shame over the fact that the country did not put up a fight at the time of the Munich agreement? Nor could one help feeling pleased that one of 'Big Brother's' protégés had been beaten.

Since there is still widespread anti-semitism, albeit of a mild character, in Czechoslovakia, this reaction was an instructive symptom of the distrust felt by the people towards the official policy in the spring of 1967.

The second train of events was sparked off by the measures taken against the writers for whom Hendrych, with the backing of Novotny and the conservatives, had won over a majority of the Central Committee members after a long debate. The writers Vaculik, Liehm and Klima were deprived of their Party membership, while a fourth, Prochazka, lost his position as a candidate for membership of the Central Committee. The rebellious weekly of the Writers' Association, *Literarni noviny*, was taken over by the Ministry of Culture.

The reaction was again a complete surprise. Hendrych failed in his efforts to make out that the writers were a group of people who had been 'misused by the enemy of the working class', and to turn the workers against them. In some factories, money was collected to help the three writers because it was feared that they would be debarred from publication. Those editors who had not been sacked from the editorial offices of *Literani noviny* refused to work under the new editor. Outside contributors withdrew their manuscripts to avoid being called collaborators. There was not a single writer of any note who would consent to write for the paper. Its circulation dropped in a matter of weeks from 140,000 to 70,000. Instead of isolating the writers and bringing them into disrepute, Hendrych's clumsy manoeuvre had made them national heroes and brought the whole cultural policy of the government into disrepute.

The next event was a demonstration by the students of Prague on the evening of 31 October. This began as a completely non-political demonstration against the frequent power failures in the student hostels of Strahov Hill. In one of the city's squares—the 'Lesser Town Square'—miles away from any government buildings that could

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possibly have been threatened, the demonstrators were beaten up by the police. Police reinforcements then herded the students back to their hostels, forced their way into their bed-sitters and manhandled students who had not even taken part in the demonstration. The non-political protest demonstration by the students became, as a result of this police brutality, an event charged with political dynamite.

First, the student organizations and the major section of the academic authorities came down on the side of the demonstrators. A committee of investigation composed of legal and constitutional experts appointed by the Minister of Culture pointed out in their findings that the right to demonstrate is laid down in the Constitution, that the demonstration had not been directed against the state, and that the brutal behaviour of the police had therefore been particularly uncalled-for. At first, the government's attitude was hostile to the students, but soon showed signs of indecision—an unusual phenomenon which was variously interpreted.

According to one version, the violent behaviour of the police had been a result of a 'political short-circuit'. The demonstration was said to have taken place only a few hours after the conclusion of the meeting of the Central Committee at which the removal of Novotny from the post of Party secretary had been discussed for the first time, and that this was the reason for 'misunderstanding' the nature of the demonstration.

Another version was that what had happened had been the result of a deliberate intervention on the part of the state security police who had been exasperated by the wavering attitude of the politicians and seized the opportunity to show that they could take a strong line and at the same time to create a *fait accompli* calculated to strengthen the position of the Novotny group.

In any case, this affair had the effect of widening the split in the Establishment. The lawyers' courageous report labelled the reformers as protectors of the Constitution and the conservatives as its destroyers. The fact that a police officer had been able by a single action to force the government into the position of having to act more harshly than they would have intended to, must have been a warning signal to the reformers. It made them acutely aware of the one thing that could jeopardize their own efforts to bring about democratic reforms, namely, the concentration of control over all uniformed formations in one single hand. It was probably one of the factors which contributed to the failure two months later of the attempt by a section of the Army to anticipate the overthrow of Novotny by a military coup.

The last impulse that brought the anti-Novotny forces together was triggered by Novotny himself. In the course of an argument with the Slovak communists, who were demanding an expanded investment programme under their own control, he referred to their leader, Dubcek, as 'a bourgeois nationalist'. This *faux pas* produced a traumatic effect. This very same reproach had been levelled at the

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Slovak communists in the past, in 1950 and 1952, when their leaders were thrown into prison on a charge of treason and the Foreign Minister Clementis, a Slovak, was executed. This was followed by a series of show-trials the memory of which still weighs heavily on the political consciousness of the country like a nightmare. Even the conservative elements in Slovakia were now convinced that the time had come to join forces with the Slovak liberals and the reformers in Bohemia and Moravia to get rid of Novotny.

Early in November, when the two groups opposing each other in the Central Committee were still perfectly balanced, Novotny invited the Soviet Party leader Brezhnev to Prague with a view to strengthening his own position.

Brezhnev listened to what both groups had to say. According to what I was told in Prague, he came to the conclusion that to supress the forces opposed to Novotny would require Russian intervention on a scale that would be bound to revive the smouldering resentment against Moscow's role in the world communist movement. Soviet intervention could endanger the holding of the communist world congress on which the Russian communists had set their heart, because it would confirm the suspicion that the Soviet Union refuses to tolerate independent action on the part of communist parties in other countries.

For this reason Brezhnev declared that Soviet Russia would not and could not intervene in the internal affairs of the Czechoslovak Party, provided the following conditions were fulfilled: the trend of developments in Czechoslovakia should not outstrip too obviously those in neighbouring communist countries and would above all have to take account of the political situation in Poland and Eastern Germany which are at present highly allergic to any liberalization; the solidarity of the Warsaw Pact Organization must not be endangered; the Czechoslovak communists should do nothing which might cause embarrassment to the Soviet Union or benefit the West.

Some people in Prague maintain, however, that Brezhnev did try to intervene on behalf of Novotny and that he met stiff resistance from the liberals. In any case, either because of the neutrality of the Soviet leader or his weakness, Novotny found himself without the decisive support of the Soviet Union. In a desperate last gamble, he and his group started to prepare a military coup to forestall an unfavourable decision of the Central Committee. At the end of December some classes of reservists, mainly tank officers, were called up; an armoured division was moved to the vicinity of Prague; and warrants for the arrest of 1,030 of Novotny's principal opponents, politicians, economists and intellectuals, were issued.

The military plot was soon betrayed to the reformers, and the whole political leadership of the army was put under Party oath to refrain from interfering in the leadership struggle.

Brezhnev's neutrality or weakness, and the abortive military coup

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thus gave the green light to the centre group in the Central Committee which up to then had been hesitating to come out on the side of the reformers. Ironically, it was of all people the dogmatic ideologist-in-chief Hendrych who in the January meeting gave the signal to desert. On 15 January 1968, the Central Committee took the decision to appoint the leader of the Slovak communists, Alexander Dubcek, to the post of Party secretary. Antonin Novotny remained in office as Head of State.

AT the outset, the reformers set themselves three tasks.

1. To appoint two working parties to elaborate a 'Plan of Action' for a structural reform of the Party and of the state, which would amount to a Communist Manifesto of the seventies, capable of turning Czechoslovakia, still being run on authoritarian lines, into a state with pluralistic elements, create a rational structure of the economy, and reform the working methods of the Party so as to make the abuse of power impossible and to establish a genuine mutual relationship between people and the Party.

2. They were bent on doing everything in their power to prevent the movement for reform getting out of hand. 'We want no Hungary 1956' was their watchword. In order to allay fears that the reforms might endanger the cohesion of the communist bloc, Dubcek visited Warsaw, Budapest and Moscow, but—significantly—not the country in the leadership of which infection with the 'Czech sickness' was most hated and feared, namely, East Germany.

3. To open up, with the exercise of all possible care at first, the sources of information. The movement for reform would have to be trustworthy and convincing if it were to succeed. It would have to turn its back for good on twisted statistics, half-truths about the past, anonymous decisions and 'secret diplomacy in the Party's work'. 'We wish to know which member of the Central Committee stands for which policy, so that we can make up our minds whether to elect him again', demanded the communist students of philosophy at the University of Brno.

At the beginning of January, the leaders of the reform movement aimed at keeping the pace down. They were anxious not to provoke the conservatives and not to be pushed into adopting repressive measures. 'We must not treat them as they have treated us', they said, 'we demand tolerance, so we must exercise tolerance'.

But then the Novotny group struck back. Their followers declared in the factories that the 'radicals', with their overstressing of the profitability of the economy, would only send up the price of housing, fares, and consumer goods, and throw people out of work. 'What will be left of our socialist achievements if not even our jobs are safe?' wrote a worker in a letter to a Party newspaper in Ostrava.

A branch meeting in the Prague engineering factory of Kolben-Danek, the head of which was a Novotny supporter, in a supposedly

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'spontaneous' resolution, condemned the demands for more democratic institutions which the new Chairman of the Writers' Association, Professor Goldstücker, had put forward in a TV discussion programme. When Professor Goldstücker and two of his colleagues made their standpoint clear at another meeting of factory workers, the same people threatened to bring out the armed factory militia 'if those arrogant students should dare to demonstrate once more against our socialist state'. In the end, a majority of those present voted in support of the writers.

At that time, the workers in the large factories were still silent; the leadership of the mass organizations, trade unions, collective farmers, journalists, and so on, showed more lip-service than evidence of genuine conversion to the new line. It was by no means certain that the reformers would succeed among the middle strata of the Party workers and at the coming district meetings.

But in the meantime the public discussion which the reformers had launched with considerable caution, gathered strength and acquired a dynamism of its own. When press, radio, and television began to give doubters and critics as much freedom of speech as the reformers and liberals, when evening after evening viewers in front of the TV screen could hear things said that up to then had only been heard in pubs, the 'revolution from above' started to spread downwards.

At first hesitantly, but then like an avalanche gaining impetus, the discussion grew and drew more and more people into its orbit, journalists, scientists, technicians, politicians, workers, ordinary people, the housewives, and above all, young people, the students. What had begun as a public discussion became a truly popular movement. The mass media grew steadily more confident and outspoken. People who had lost faith in the possibility of shaping society, disillusioned young people, apathetic workers, disheartened intellectuals saw now, before their very eyes, a chance to help in shaping their country's future. And they seized it.

In March, public discussion reached a pitch which made it into a new power factor. No one could resist its demands. The censors themselves called for the abolition of censorship, judges who had pronounced political sentences called for the rehabilitation of their victims, and officers demanded the removal of fellow-officers suspected of complicity in the January conspiracy. Suddenly everyone had become a liberal. And in the great public discussion a demand was raised which the reformers had not previously dared to raise because they did not feel themselves strong enough, namely, the removal of Novotny because he symbolized the past.

Then it was that the large factories of Pilsen, Kladno, Sokolow, and Most swung over to the reformers; at the district meetings the conservatives were no more than an isolated minority; organization after organization, and finally a parliamentary committee demanded Novotny's resignation.

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ON 21 March, Dubcek went to Moscow. Next day, President Novotny resigned. It was almost exactly ten weeks since the meeting of the Central Committee at which he had been deposed from the leadership of the Party—ten weeks that shook Czechoslovakia. Thus ended the first stage in the process of bringing new life into Czechoslovak society and creating the preconditions for the next phase: for the public discussion of the Action Programme and its realization.

In the course of the breathtaking process of regeneration that took place in those ten weeks, a belief was also reborn which contains the germ of a new inner conflict, a new disappointment, namely, the old messianic belief in the redeeming power of the communist movement. Way back in May 1967, a university lecturer had said to me, 'Thank God we have grown out of idealism. Your generation with its unrealistic belief in the goodness of man, your belief that a moral appeal is all that's needed to set the world to rights is responsible for the mess our society is in.' But in March of this year, a friend of hers, a leading publicist, said to me, 'If we succeed in what we are now trying to do, the world will say of us in 50 years' time that we were the first people to lay—at long last—the foundations of a truly humane socialist society'.

Every reforming movement needs the idealism and the enthusiasm expressed in these words. But there is deeply rooted in the tradition of the communist movement a tendency to fanatical missionary zeal, an almost puritanical longing for absolutes—goodness, purity, morality. This tendency has emerged in Czechoslovakia in the form of an unrealistic expectation by many young people and a number of old communists that in future everything will be rational, clean, and honest.

Yet even if this kind of expectation should never be destined to come true, the reformers of Czechoslovakia must be given their due for raising this torch of hope, which in their country had almost gone out.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA AT THE CROSSROADS

Vera Blackwell

CZECHOSLOVAKIA may change the course of history. For what the Czechs and the Slovaks are trying to do these days is to construct a brand new political model. And this is not only geared to lift their own country out of the economic backwaters and political oblivion; if their experiment succeeds, this model will be rather attractive to both East and West. As they see it, if one may oversimplify, what the West lacks is socialism, what the East lacks is freedom. They want to combine the two. This 'attempt for the first time in history to marry socialism with liberty', in the words of Dr Eduard Goldstücker, Chairman of the Writers' Union (*Literarni listy*, 1 March 1968), is not only the goal, but the very spur of their endeavour.

They, as well as many foreign observers, feel that if any country can swing it, Czechoslovakia can. Why? Because of Czechoslovakia's position in the very heart of Europe, signifying, above all else, endless cross-currents of ideas, ideals and ideologies. Because of Czechoslovakia's unique experience of having lived so long 'in the very centre of history', as Milan Kundera put it during the turbulent Writers' Congress (*Literarni noviny*, 22 September 1967). In the twentieth century the Czechs and Slovaks went through the whole range: Empire, Democracy, Occupation, Revolutionary Uprising, Stalinism. And in contrast to all the other socialist states, Czechoslovakia alone can boast of having once been an enlightened and vigorous democratic republic.

This experiment might fail, of course. It may well be that all the exciting promises of a thorough reform will end in compromises and in half-measures, that the whole creative upsurge will slowly subside and then peter out, that the new leaders little by little will assume some of the habits of the old leaders, the raised dust will settle and so will the roused citizens. Though on the evidence of the recent events this seems an improbable outcome of the present Czechoslovak 'revolution', it cannot be entirely discarded. After all, as the Poles and the Hungarians are apt to point out, something of the sort happened after 1956 in their countries. Though 1956 is not exactly 1968, nor Czechoslovakia Hungary or Poland, nor Gomulka or Kadar really quite Dubcek, the danger that Czechoslovakia might again lapse into another kind of totalitarian civic slumber is conceivable. But it is not likely. One may fear that when the going gets tough, as it will when the (so far largely theoretical) democratization begins to be institutionally implemented, the temptation to take the path of least resistance might become irresistible. However, there is reason to believe that Czechoslovakia has learned from the Polish and Hungarian examples.

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Whatever the result of the attempted democratization, it is certain that putting it into practice will be a slow process, even if it is not interrupted by foreign pressure or halted by outside intervention. Yet intervention, too, appears highly improbable. Whatever the result, 1968 will enter history as the year when Czechoslovakia stood at the crossroads.

WHEN at the outset, in the eight-hundreds, the Czechs chose the Latin rite in preference to the Byzantine, they became an ineradicable part of Western culture, based on the ideas of Roman law, Christian charity, and also of humanist rationalism. This heritage, so often emphasized in Czechoslovakia during and since the Fourth Writers' Congress, and so obscured, particularly in the West, by the post-Yalta creation not only of a political, but also of a cultural 'east European' lump, came to the surface the moment the Czechs were again able to behave naturally.

Although the character of the Czechoslovak events of 1968 has been influenced by centuries of Czech history (in particular the last 100 years, which brought high industrialization, at least to Bohemia, and the living experience of functioning democracy to both Czechs and Slovaks), their timing and content spring from more recent sources: political, economic, national (the problem of Slovakia), cultural (the intellectuals' upheaval). In all these spheres it was the opaque, rigid centralism of the Novotny regime which continued to aggravate the situation all the way to the final breaking point.

It was in 1956, when the Soviet iron grip on the then 'satellite' CPs began to relax, with the resulting partial release from the absolute commands of Party (i.e. of the Soviet Party) discipline, that some of the young Party officials and intellectuals began to feel free to assess the real situation of the country. The picture being what it was, why did not the pressure for a thorough reform begin then and there? 'Because', says A. J. Liehm, 'it was then mistakenly believed that Stalinism was characterized merely by its most striking, most extreme aberrations . . . and that by removing them (the almighty power of the police, the uncontrollable judiciary, the limitations of personal freedom, etc.), Stalinism would be liquidated. The realization that Stalinism went much deeper than these extremes came only gradually' (an interview given to the *Gazette de Lausanne*, 31 January 1968).

What then became 'gradually' clear to these young communists was what the great majority of people had known all along, namely, that the cruelties and the horrendous inefficiencies of the system were not merely a result of 'Stalinism' (though that convenient scapegoat continued to be officially blamed for all evil until last January), but of the fundamental characteristics of the Novotny regime. Above all, they began to realize that if left to its course, or more precisely non-course, the country was courting disaster, most particularly in the economic sphere; that the imposition of the Soviet model on a highly

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industrialized economy did not, and in fact could never, work. And nobody should be able to appreciate more acutely than a Marxist the obvious fact that a collapse of the economic basis would bring down the whole 'superstructure'. Therefore, long before the 13th CPCS Congress in 1966, some of the younger, more alert Party officials had begun trying to do something about it. The economists and the technocrats had been pushing for a revision of the economy for years. And so, a new Economic Model, aiming at a decentralization and a greater scope for individual initiative, including the necessary incentives, was created (its chief architect being Professor Ota Sik) and instituted in 1966.

However, a new economic model is unworkable without a supporting, and equally new, political model, most particularly in a Marxist context. Thus, at least a rudimentary outline of the present political changes potentially existed even then. Zdenek Mlynar, one of the leading constructors of the current Action Programme (prepared by a large body of specialists between January and March of this year), suggests as much. 'For the last 12 years', he says, '. . . I have striven for an inner transformation of our political system . . . and since 1956 . . . I have directed my own theoretical work, as well as that of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences team, towards the research of an optimal political model for this country' (*Literarni listy*, 21 March 1968). Yet the suggested economic reform came into effect unsupported by any such corollary political changes and thus was inevitably and almost instantly crippled by the inflexibility and obscurantism of the vast, centralized bureaucratic machinery, run by the old conservatives and presided over by Novotny. A similar fate was in store for any attempt whatever to change the status quo. Some small concessions, above all in the arts, were won only after an exhausting and nerve-wracking struggle. As Ludvik Vaculik said, what has been achieved, was achieved in spite of 'the ruling circles . . . it was literally bullied out of them' (transcript of his Congress speech, *Literarni listy*, 28 March 1968).

In the same way nothing whatever has been done about the problem of Slovakia. The Slovaks were getting more and more restless under the pressure of the Prague-centred Novotny regime, particularly after the abolition of their Board of Commissioners (symbolizing at least a token Slovak autonomy) by the Constitution of 1960. But instead of even beginning to consider their justified grievances, the regime, and Novotny personally, had always snubbed the Slovaks at every possible opportunity. Novotny became the bogey of the Slovaks not only because of his tactless behaviour, but even more because of his implication in the judicial murder of their hero, Vlado Clementis, during the Slansky purge-trials. (Karol Bacilek, the then Minister of National Security, praised Antonin Novotny in a statement published by *Rude pravo*, 18 December 1952, for his leading part in exposing Slansky's 'anti-state conspiratorial centre'.) And Novotny was directly responsible for the long-term imprisonment of the Slovak leaders, Gustav Husak and Laco

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Novomesky, as well as for the resistance to their full rehabilitation after 1963. (Yet, ironically enough, one of the staunchest supporters of Antonin Novotny throughout the December-January crisis and even beyond was a Slovak, Michal Chudik, Chairman of the Slovak National Council. Another Slovak, the 'liberal' Prime Minister, Jozef Lenart, sided with Novotny during the December Presidium deadlock. Both later lost their positions.)

CLEARLY, if the country, as well as the unity of Czechs and Slovaks, were to be saved, the old bureaucrats had to be prized out of their positions of power. For the long overdue reorganization of the whole system could not even start, let alone be properly implemented, without the removal of Novotny and his men from their key positions. The new leaders surely did not reach this elementary conclusion only minutes before the two crucial Plenum meetings of the Central Committee (19–21 December, 3–5 January).

During these meetings the point at issue was the splitting of the Party First Secretaryship from the Presidency. The combination of the two functions had existed in Czechoslovakia (with the sole exception of the Presidency of Antonin Zapotocky, 1953–1957) ever since 1949 when the then First Secretary, Klement Gottwald, became President. The pressure for the division of the two offices meant not only the beginning of the end of Novotny, but also the first step towards Party and Government separating, towards splitting their interlocking functions, the mechanism which had been paralysing the country for years.

The liberals could not have supposed that Novotny would go without a fight. As it turned out, his summoning of 'outside' allies, Leonid Brezhnev in December, the Czechoslovak army also in December and again in January, only hastened his downfall. In the Presidium, however, he had mustered just enough support (the votes were 5:5) to keep things at least in the balance. But the resulting appointment of a special commission (consisting of 22 members: the 10 members of the Presidium plus 12 chosen regional representatives), tipped the scales against Novotny. Then, the CC, which for the first time ceased to be a pawn of the Presidium, finally ousted Antonin Novotny, during their January Plenum, from his post as the Party's First Secretary, a position he had held for the last 15 years, and chose the Slovak Party leader, Alexander Dubcek, as his successor. It seems that the appointment of Alexander Dubcek came as a surprise to the liberals who were active behind the scenes during the many crises. It may well be that they accepted him in the beginning in order to placate the disgruntled Slovaks. And indeed, at first sight, Dubcek appeared to be an unlikely choice. He is a shy, withdrawn man, the very reverse of a magnetic, popular figure (particularly compared to such men as the Czech hero of the present 'revolution', Josef Smrkovsky), he is not even really a good speaker. But the choice was

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a happy one. He has since, in an amazingly short time, proved himself to be a superb tactician.

The smoothness of the Dubcek take-over and the highly skilful handling of the 'revolution', as well as of Czechoslovakia's tricky position within the international context, testify that Dubcek and his friends are not just 'muddling through', moved on merely by popular pressures, or sudden strokes of good luck (such as General Sejna's escape to the USA, although this fact did help to precipitate Novotny's removal from the Presidency on 22 March). They are firmly in charge, unrattled by the avalanche of unexpected events inside the country, or by menacing gestures from abroad.

As an example, consider the choice of General Ludvik Svoboda as Czechoslovakia's new President. (His 'election' by the National Assembly took place in Prague on 30 March.) This is a Janus-like gesture (as so many of the present rulers' public gestures have been) towards the democratic forces within and the conservative forces without. The General is a Czech war hero, known for his liberal attitudes, and a former Minister of Defence (1945–50), removed from public office and persecuted by the previous regime (he ended as a minor accountant). At the same time, he has been acceptable to the Soviet Union, having led the Czech army fighting on the Russian side during both World Wars. He has been decorated by the Soviets with the 'Order of Lenin' and made 'Hero of the Soviet Union'. If there was ever a clear example of having one's cake and eating it, it is surely provided by the new Czechoslovak leadership.

All this does not suggest the exclusion from history of the important element of chance. What it does suggest, however, is that the present leaders' advance planning and their skill in and out of office are the real keys to the 'peaceful revolution' in Czechoslovakia. It was neither the stormy Fourth Writers' Congress (27–29 June), nor the students' battle with the police (on 30 November) which toppled the Novotny regime as is sometimes claimed; though each did give it a good push.

THE Writers' Congress was unquestionably the most significant event preceding the January Plenum. Viewed from the vantage point of today, it appears as a try-out for the 'revolution'. Among the main topics then discussed were: the divergence between the practical application of socialism and its stated ideals, the abuses of state power vis-à-vis the individual, the need to re-establish the disrupted links with the Czech past and with west European culture to which the Czechs traditionally belong, etc.

Many of the speeches were truly incendiary (and, of course, though banned, they were instantly and widely circulated in typewritten copies). The now ex-Chairman of the CC's Ideological Commission, Jiri Hendrych, rightly called the Congress 'a platform for a political demonstration' (*Literarni noviny*, 7 October 1967). The rebels were predominantly communist writers of the middle generation and they

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voiced their anger at the regime they once supported, their intense disillusionment at not having 'built the socialism of . . . [their] dreams' (*Literarni noviny*, 17 July 1967). In doing this, they dropped the usual ritual of equivocation and double-meaning and kept striking directly at the regime. The fact that it took the Party a whole *three months* (from the end of June to the end of September) to invoke its sanctions against the rebellious writers (sanctions which, considering the enormity of the offence from the regime's point of view, were still rather mild) suggests that the writers' cause must have found some pretty potent backing among the highest Party officials. (Naturally, all these sanctions have now been revoked and the Congress rebels have become the heroes of the 'revolution'.)

IF there were any need to test public opinion before the final 'coup' was delivered, the case of the writers' journal, *Literarni noviny*, certainly supplied the necessary information in the absence of a Czech equivalent of a Gallup Poll. (The Institute for the Research of Public Opinion has now been reopened after 20 years and is already busy testing, particularly on topical political questions. The results are published in the now quite free press.) When *Literarni noviny*, a lively and very popular cultural weekly with a circulation of 130,000 (its actual readership was estimated at 500,000), was transferred from the Writers' Union to the Ministry of Culture and its editorial board dissolved (as a reprisal for the writers' rebellion), it was instantly boycotted by writers and readers alike. Not one established writer would contribute to it in spite of pressure, financial as well as institutional. Subscriptions were cancelled on a massive scale (c. 70,000), and unbought copies of the new *Literarni noviny* (put together by hacks) kept accumulating in the shops. The happy end of the story was recounted by Richard Davy in *The Times* (1 March 1968). He wrote that on the day the first issue of the new writers' journal, now called *Literarni listy*, came out, the news-stands were 'virtually stormed' and 'by 7 a.m. the entire issue of 120,000 had been sold out' (since then the circulation has risen to 275,000).

The reason for the popularity of the writers' journal lies not only in the high standard of its writing, nor just in the fact that, at least since the 'thaw', it had been the only paper which printed as much truth as might elude the vigilance of the censor. The reason lies also in the position the intellectual holds in Czechoslovak society. It would be hard to find another country, East or West, where the voice of the intelligentsia has such wide and truly popular resonance, not even in Poland, where the writer's role has also been exceptionally important since the eighteenth century. The position of the intelligentsia in Czechoslovak society has important historical reasons. Modern Czechoslovakia was virtually founded by intellectuals, through their deliberate decision in the early nineteenth century to resuscitate the Czech nation (dormant since 1620), through the sustained energy with which they

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proceeded to do so, and through the enthusiastic response their efforts received. Culture and arts became the chief political weapons in the struggle for national emancipation. And this is why ever since the intellectuals have felt themselves to be, and have been looked upon as being, traditionally responsible for the very existence of the nation.

Therein (as in Poland and Hungary in 1956), lies the significance of the writers' rebellion, as well as the chief cause of it. For this feeling of historical responsibility inevitably put the writers on a collision course with the Party, the moment the intellectuals ceased to subscribe to Party goals. Equally, they represent a powerful ally the moment the Party is able and willing to identify itself with the intellectuals' cause.

This cause is rooted in history, and its accent is on national tradition, so long suppressed by the Novotny regime. The huge crowd which, in early March, travelled miles out of Prague to the graves of the Masaryks, who for the Czechs symbolize the birth, the vigour and the long lamented death of democracy, illustrates the danger of that national tradition to the old system.

During their Congress the writers strongly objected to the official insistence on counting the year 1948 as the beginning of Czechoslovak history (cf., for instance, the reprint of Ivan Klima's speech, *Literarni listy*, 7 March 1968); and their Resolution stated that, on the contrary, 'the continuity of Czechoslovak culture was disrupted from 1949' (*Literarni noviny*, 8 July 1967). An appeal to the national heritage, lately being made by the new leadership, has, one might almost say, pumped extra adrenalin into the bloodstream of the country and most particularly that of the intelligentsia. The enthusiastic return *ad fontes*, even though diverging from the principles on which Czechoslovak independence was built in 1918, would ultimately, according to Alexandr Kliment, bring the following results: 'Free elections, a functioning Parliament with an Opposition, a rehabilitation of public opinion, active neutrality, a federalization of an independent state.' In other words, and here the non-communist Kliment associates himself with the newly restated Party goals: 'a socialism of our own type, reflecting our needs, our possibilities and our choice'. The most popular hero of the 'revolution', Josef Smrkovsky, the new President of the National Assembly (imprisoned by the Novotny regime in the fifties, now appointed to Novotny's place in the Party Presidium), wrote, 'It depends on us, on Czechs and Slovaks, to enter courageously into the unexplored terrain and in it to look for our Czechoslovak socialist road. This is . . . our duty to ourselves and to the whole international socialist movement' (*Rude pravo*, 9 February 1968). Alexander Dubcek has emphasized on many occasions the necessity for Czechoslovakia to follow its own road to socialism.

Through this appeal the communists and the non-communists have for the first time united in being above all else citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic, and they seem to combine their efforts towards the realization of national goals. As a matter of fact, in spite of some

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understandable hesitations as to the genuineness and durability of the present trend, the nation has not achieved such unanimity of purpose for years.

THE age-old dream of the Czechs that their chief political and indeed national mission is to build bridges between West and East has once again come to the surface and reanimated Czech national pride. Alexandr Kliment wrote: 'Only a free and proud nation can also have an international, in our case European, mission' (*Literarni listy*, 1 March 1968). This 'dream' has become part of the new policy. During the Czechoslovak February celebrations Alexander Dubcek emphasized the 'bridge-building' role of Czechoslovakia as regards foreign policy, its main purpose being 'to help normalize the relations between states with different social systems' (*Le Monde*, 24 February 1968).

Another ambition which has always haunted the Czechs, and in particular the intellectuals, could be summed up (no doubt a bit cynically) as follows: since it is clear the country can never become a military or an economic power, and since states, no less than individuals, resent anonymity and insignificance, the only way for Czechoslovakia to generate international recognition is for the country to become a kind of 'think-tank' of Europe. This hope of becoming a 'culture power' had helped to attract great resources of talent into the arts and sciences in the nineteenth century. Both during the First Republic and again since the 'thaw', Czechoslovak culture has made amazing strides towards commanding world attention. This important springboard of Czechoslovak energy, so short-sightedly sabotaged by the Novotny regime, has been recognized and encouraged. During the celebrations last February of the communist take-over of 1948, Alexander Dubcek, instead of starting his main speech in Prague with some dreary reminiscences of the role of the militia in those 'historic days', opened with a truly Periclean panegyric on the city, its great and profound beauty and its great and profound mission as a cultural and intellectual centre.

This release of energy through giving full scope to every aspect of the national tradition dwarfs, at least for the moment, the danger for the Party inherent in the Czechoslovak past. This does not mean, however, that a basic political and institutional problem will not have to be faced at some not too distant date and dealt with one way or another. For the Czechoslovak movement towards a thorough democratization guaranteeing civil rights and responsibilities, must necessarily, sooner or later, come into conflict with the constitutionally decreed 'leading role of the CP' in Czechoslovak society. Though the present events surely mean a reanimation of the Party itself, this very renaissance makes it certain that its basic position vis-à-vis the great majority of the population is going to be reformulated.

All the suggested, and already partially realized, reforms mean

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in effect a curb on the 'leading role of the Party'. The electoral reform, with its free choice of candidates, secret ballots, full accountability of the chosen representatives to the electorate, etc. The return of full legislative powers to the Parliament. The division of roles for the Party and Government. The revitalization of the National Front, including the non-Party mass organizations (youth associations, trades unions, etc.), as well as the two principal non-communist political parties (the Socialist Party and the Catholic People's Party), until now entirely emasculated. The guarantees of independent responsibility and authority above all to the judiciary (incidentally, there are only a handful of judges and, according to *Lidova demokracie* of 20 November 1967, just 800 practising lawyers left in the whole country), to other state organs, social organizations and interest groups. (Particularly important among the new 'pressure groups' are the Association of Resistance Fighters, the persecuted Catholics gathered around their bishop, Dr Tomasek, and the *Klub '231'*, named after the penal code under which the victims of Stalinist terror were condemned. They all demand a full investigation of the crimes committed during the fifties and a full rehabilitation of the victims, estimated at over 40,000 persons.) The free and speedy flow of information both ways, from the highest Party and state organs to the general public, and vice versa. The virtual abolition of censorship (with the sole exception of matters pertaining to the security of the state), including the mass media, the press, radio and television, which are making full use of their newly regained freedom of speech. (At this point, at least one, perhaps the most touching, among the veritable avalanche of news items coming daily from Czechoslovakia, must be mentioned: the official request of the Czechoslovak censors for the abolition of censorship.) In short, all this means an active participation by citizens in the shaping of their country's and their own destiny, supported by constitutional, legal guarantees of the basic democratic liberties. It cannot be achieved without a general sharing of power and of responsibility.

ALL the various propositions as to the continued leadership of the Party in a democratic society that keep coming out of Czechoslovakia show the Party is wrestling with this problem. Nevertheless, so far none of the ideas seems to have gone to the real crux of the problem satisfactorily. Michal Lakatos's hopeful suggestion that the 'leading role of the Party' should consist in an overall 'co-ordination' of the differing interests of various state bodies, organizations and social groups (*Kulturni noviny*, 24 February 1968) is far too vague. Mr Dubcek's definition, though most encouraging, also seems to be rooted in hopes, rather than in constitutionally delimited areas of actual power, or the lack of it: 'The leading role of the Party is not given once and for all. It must go on being renewed. The Party must continually keep winning the trust and the support of public opinion. A political party can perform its leading function either from the positions of power (we are

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convinced, however, that this method has been overcome in our country), or from such positions as would be capable of influencing the wide public. In this case, its position of power consists in an active and free support by the majority of the people.' The new role of the Party, he continued, was 'to influence the solutions and decisions of the state organisms, making known to them the position of the Party, but in the knowledge that it is the government, the National Assembly and, in Slovakia, the National Slovak Council, which must make concrete decisions on problems of the political life of the country' (an interview given by Alexander Dubcek to *L'Unita*, 31 March 1968). Josef Smrkovsky's terse statement is the most realistic definition to date, provided a clause along these lines is included in the proposed redrafting of the Constitution. 'As I see it', he said, 'the Communist Party should have those rights which it can win for itself in a democratic system, and it will have a leading role, if it morally deserves it' (*Prace*, 15 March 1968).

The possibility that democratization will lead to political pluralism has also been tackled by Party theorists, including Zdenek Mlynar (*Rude pravo*, 26 March 1968) who until recently had been against the introduction of political opposition. Whereas the communists suggest either a resuscitation of the largely discredited parties of the National Front, or possibly the creation of an opposition group inside the Communist Party itself, non-communists, like Alexandr Kliment, argue that all the 'outside' forces, so far defined only negatively as *non*-communist, *non*-Party, etc., should in a functioning democracy—in contradistinction to the previous dictatorship—be given full scope for organizing themselves (*Literarni listy*, 14 March 1968). Vaclav Havel argues that the very health of the governing party can be guaranteed only through pressure from an opposition party, equipped with equal rights and equal opportunities. And he adds that the energies of the non-communist majority of the nation cannot be truly made use of until there are at least 'minimal guarantees that a communist mistake will not be [considered] for ever and in principle superior to a non-communist truth. And if many a non-communist saw a communist mistake already at a time when the communists had no idea about its wrongness, it is necessary that this be admitted, at least belatedly. . . . If this is not possible, then it means that the communists are a special sort of supermen who—in principle—are right even when they are wrong, whereas the non-communists are—in principle—wrong even when they are right. . . . If the communists have a guaranteed right to an occasional mistake, the non-communists must have a guaranteed right to an occasional truth; otherwise . . . [the democratization] makes no sense at all' (*Literarni listy*, 4 April 1968).

Clearly, the creation of a socialist democracy will not be easy. The solution of all the many problems connected with this experiment will demand a continued flow of that energy, so spectacularly released during the first revolutionary months. But regardless of whether

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Czechoslovakia can prove that a real union between socialism and democracy is not only thinkable in theory, but also realizable in practice, or whether it will be defeated by some old, possibly inherent, or some new, as yet unforeseen, 'distortions', the outcome will be of paramount importance for the future of socialism and of communism, inside and outside Czechoslovakia.

Postscript: A letter from Prague

Czechoslovakia at the Crossroads was written in London between two visits to Prague, the previous one being in the second half of December 1967. This time the day of my arrival coincided with the publication of the Action Programme, accepted by the Central Committee of the CPCS on 5 April. This long document (30 pages) formed the entire issue of *Rude pravo* (10 April 1968). It is a detailed official restatement of reforms previously discussed in the Czechoslovak press, on the radio and on television. It enumerates a number of concrete steps to be taken with the aim of creating a system in which a fundamentally socialist structure might be combined with legal guarantees of democratic civil liberties. Like earlier statements, however, it does not define too precisely how this is to be achieved.

But in spite of the imprecisions, the document seems to represent a serious endeavour on the part of the Czechoslovak Communist Party to come to grips with things and with people as they are, rather than as they doctrinally ought to be. This in itself makes the document unique in the annals of the Party. Had it been published in Czechoslovakia before January, it would have been a bombshell. Now one can hardly find anyone in Prague who has actually read it.

The impression one gets these days in Prague is that the revolution is over. The great excitement of the preceding months has given way to exhaustion. It is the inevitable 'morning after'. With the return of the every-day routine come worries and hesitations. D'Artagnans turn into Prufrocks ('Do I dare, do I dare disturb the universe?'). What is needed (to stick to literary metaphors) is a Hercules who would combine daring with hard work and be endowed with enough skill and cunning to accomplish the supreme labour of cleaning the proverbial stables.

The prevalent feeling among the people seems to be an impatience with the way the promised transformation of the system appears to them to drag. The Janus-like skill of Mr Dubcek is no longer fully appreciated. He has even begun to be accused of 'centralism' (i.e. 'appeasement', since Munich a dirty word in Czech). As for the Programme, it is being described as just 'words, words, words'. What we are witnessing, some people say in Prague, is merely an exchange of generations inside the same power group. But they are no longer afraid

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to voice their criticisms of the regime in public, into the microphone live on the air.*

The most forceful spokesman of the Czechs fearing the 'Gomulkaist regression' is the philosopher Ivan Svitak. 'We support the new crew . . . of the Communist Party', he says, 'but we ought clearly to bear in mind that . . . their maximum programme is our minimum programme. . . . The accord between the critical intellectuals and the high representatives of the Party and of the state is a momentary expression of a unity of interests which will end as soon as the new crew firmly grasp the state power, as soon as they begin to consider the democratization accomplished at the level reached on their coming to power. Democratization will end and democracy will not begin. . . . What we want is democracy, not democratization. . . . The peculiarity of the present changes consists in the fact that so far no fundamental changes have actually occurred, the mechanisms of totalitarian dictatorship continue undisturbed. What exists is only the freedom of the press, a hope for democratic elections and for a restructuring of the state power. We are quite indifferent to the reshuffle of the cadres, . . . they were all appointed by a highly undemocratic system; what we are interested in is . . . a permanent transformation of totalitarian dictatorship into a European system with a democratic form of government' (*Student*, 10 April 1968, see page 83).

Many people consider Svitak's position too radical and/or premature. By pulling the carpet from under Dubcek's feet, they point out, Svitak endangers the 'minimum programme' he is ready provisionally to support. On the whole, the non-communist public seem to hover these days somewhere between suspended hope and suspended disbelief. 'Let's wait and see', people say, some hopefully, some with an undertone of bitter irony.

All this is the result of the long years of a Protean impermanence, of the endless transience of Czech reality. Ever since Munich, what one day had been an event in Czechoslovakia was soon after a non-event. All this time the only certainty people have had about any official statement was that sooner or later it would be reversed. 'All is otherwise' has become an oft-repeated Czech saying. This ingrained feeling of uncertainty cannot be simply erased from people's consciousness by one budget of good news; it will take a lot of undoing.

* Public opinion is playing an increasingly important part in the present political scene. As an example, consider some of the loaded questions the readers of *Rude pravo* were encouraged to answer (anonymously) in mid-May: Should the Communist Party realize its leading role by ruling society, or by devotedly serving its free progressive socialist development? Is the Czechoslovak manner of constructing and developing socialism our internal matter to be decided by the sovereign will of the people? Which are the guarantees of democracy—the leading role of the Party, or its inner democratization, or a democratic opposition—i.e. 1. public opinion, 2. social and other interest groups, 3. non-communist parties inside the National Front, 4. a two-party system? Etc.

It is significant that this questionnaire was prepared by the CC's Institute of Political Sciences together with the editorial board of the Party's newspaper (cf. *Rude pravo*, 13 May 1968.)

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Nevertheless, the first steps have been taken and the youth remains enthusiastic.

By far the most positive and also the most moving aspect of the present 'revolution', the one that has made the deepest impression on me, having arrived, as I did, in Prague from London, is the general respect and the great longing the Czechs, both inside and outside the Party, feel for the permanent values of European culture. These appear very real and very precious to all, but particularly to the young intellectuals. It is one of the supreme paradoxes of history that the intelligentsia and the youth of the West not only keep undermining those very values, but do so in the name of the (for them largely mysterious) 'East'. Viewed from Prague, it becomes crystal clear that the true antipodes of the young Ho-Che-Mao followers in the West, of various shapes and hues, are precisely their supposed allies in the East. When Rudi Dutschke, visiting Prague University a week before he was shot, tried to sell to the students of the Philosophical Faculty his brand of 'anarcho-Maoism', they rejected his ideas as 'absurd', 'comic', and not worthy of consideration by 'a fifteen-year-old'. It seems as though the humane and rational principles of Western democracy were moving eastwards, while the inhuman principles of totalitarian violence were moving westwards. The East is regaining its rationality, while in the West the young intelligentsia is sinking into the visceral regions of unreason and hysteria.

Returning to London from Prague one is cheered by the Czechs' lack of the phoney, fashionable gesturing which often makes the intellectual climate of the West so unbearably oppressive nowadays. It is encouraging to find at least in some parts of Europe the intelligentsia wrestling with problems which are both real and relevant.

(*Since this postscript was written, there has been increasing Soviet pressure on Czechoslovakia. The* Rude pravo *poll indicated that more than 90 per cent of non-Party members and 50 to 60 per cent of Party members favoured a Socialist democracy based on a multi-party system. The idea is so dangerous to the orthodox communist states that the much-vaunted theory of non-interference in the affairs of other socialist states is thrown overboard and Czechoslovak sovereignty openly violated.*—Edit.)

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DOCUMENTS:
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Action Programme of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, published on 10 April 1968, indicates both the desire to arrive at the 'democratization of the entire social and political system' and the limitations set at present on the possibilities of its achievement. While the Action Programme calls for the preparation of the new Constitution in such a way that its draft can be thoroughly discussed by the public, and for the systematic use of public opinion polls in the preparation of important policy decisions, it makes clear at the same time that political disagreements are not to be given an institutional basis:

> *'The Party sees the National Front as a political platform, but without any division of political parties into government and opposition which could make it possible for an opposition to be formed against state policy . . . or for a political struggle to be waged for a power in the state.'*

However, some voices went further in their approach to the problem, among them the important 'Two-thousand words' statement by L. Vaculik. We publish below in abridged form two earlier articles on institutional reform in Czechoslovakia. The author of the first one, Vaclav Havel, is a prominent playwright, best known for his two plays, The Garden Party *and* The Memorandum. *The author of the second article, which was originally given as a lecture at Prague University, is Ivan Svitak, whose article on 'Kafka as a Philosopher' appeared in a special issue of our magazine devoted to Czechoslovakia in April 1966. The whole text consists of eight parts, but for reasons of space only Part IV, written like the rest in the form of numbered paragraphs, and the summary of Part VI and Part VIII are given here.*

Vaclav Havel: 'On the Subject of Opposition' (Literarni listy, 4 April 1968)

WE hear quite often that, because of our present and future freedom of speech (which is said to be the essence of democracy), the natural function of opposition will be exercised simply by public opinion with access to mass communications media. Such a concept assumes *faith* that the government will draw from public criticism all the necessary inferences. However, democracy is a matter not of faith but of *guarantees*. Even if we admit that the public 'competition of views' is the first condition, the most important factor in and the natural result of democracy, its very essence—and the true source of our guarantees—is something else, namely, public and legal '*competition for power*'.

I also consider as illusory the assumption that internal democratization of the leading party (readiness to tolerate something like internal party opposition) offers a sufficient guarantee of democracy. This is true not only because, in principle, the only true democracy is that which applies equally to everybody, but also because it has been the bitter experience of every revolution that if the political group which takes over does not restore *control from outside* in time, it must sooner

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or later also lose its *own internal control* and begins, slowly but surely, to degenerate. All the internal control pressures within the group, which improve the quality of its leadership, are necessarily moribund unless they are fed by control pressures from without, which increase the strength of the group as a whole. The group, instead of continually and naturally regenerating itself, suffers from progressive sclerosis, and alienates itself increasingly from the reality. The end of this process is well known. When the situation becomes uncontrollable, the first unexpected disturbance causes an explosion—and the time of bloody palace revolutions, coups, lobby conspiracies, counter-revolutions, and suicides arrives. The 'competition for power', which had disappeared as an overt phenomenon sometime ago, suddenly reappears and strikes in every direction, all the more subtly and dangerously because it is hidden. The absence of legal guarantees, which the group failed to renew in time, turns on it now like a boomerang. The group liquidates itself. In other words, if the Communist Party does not make possible rapid development of strong outside control, it will have no guarantee that it will not again start to degenerate. It is clear that internal Party democracy cannot survive for any length of time without democracy in the whole of society. It is not the former which guarantees the latter, but vice versa.

ANOTHER idea which has sprung up—that independent individuals might take the part of the opposition in elections and in various agencies—is to my mind a classic example of how to cut the ground from under the opposition's feet before it has had a chance to form. A handful of private individuals—without any political background, lacking any possibility of collective agreement on procedures, candidates, co-ordination, and a broader concept of political work, and given only a few local communal rights and duties—would have to stand up against a perfectly organized and disciplined political party with an ideology, an apparatus, press and propaganda organs, and a programme for society as a whole. In elections, these independent candidates would not have the support resulting from well-known capabilities, activity, and a programme involving society as a whole and presented by the group which proposes them and to which they belong; thus—unlike the candidates of the leading party—they would lack the classic, time-tested means of guiding the electorate, an overwhelming majority of which neither can nor will make distinctions between individual candidates but can always be counted on to follow generally accepted political concepts. Also, this dispersed 'opposition' would not have the slightest chance of undertaking any effective and co-ordinated political activity that could compete with that of communists. What it boils down to is that the leading party cannot take seriously any 'competition for power' that is not, by reason of its organization, a real political force, nor can it believe that its monopolistic position is put to any serious test of quality by such opposition.

Another type of potential control or actual opposition is sometimes apparent in social and special-interest organizations. Even this is not a fundamental, sound solution, though some of these organizations may

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in time acquire a certain amount of political influence. Based on principles other than those of political conviction, and destined for a purpose other than that of sharing the political power of the state, these organizations can never take on the role of an organ that controls the exercise of power, simply because they do not fulfil the fundamental condition—that of independence of the controlling element from what it controls. Membership in these organizations not only does not exclude membership in a leading or other party, but as a matter of fact at the highest level the functionaries of these organizations are almost exclusively members of the Party, subordinated to its higher bodies and responsible to it for their guidance of the special-interest organizations. If we add to this the well-known system of Party groups, Party lists of candidates, and the Party-disciplined system of voting (plus the election rules which make it practically impossible for non-communist voters to elect an opposition candidate), we can understand that true control from without is difficult to imagine, even if the practice of ballot manipulating should undergo certain changes, as it certainly will. It seems certain that there will now be a trend toward dividing up many of the artificially united and unwieldy colossi, and toward greater differentiation among organizations; any attempt at political integration or coalition of these organizations into some 'political-control' bloc would have a counteractive effect on our development and would lead to no worthwhile end.

The most logical and easiest solution would be to constitute an opposition in the manner most often proposed by official sources through regeneration of the existing non-communist parties of the National Front. It cannot be taken for granted *a priori* that the forces capable of leading such an opposition would fail to come out on top in these parties; I personally do not believe they would. I am afraid that in the course of the past 20 years, during which time these parties and their representatives slavishly agreed with everything the leading Party did, they have compromised themselves so much that their advantages (their existing organizations, press, etc.) cannot outweigh the disadvantage—the difficulty of regaining lost confidence. Not to mention the fact that it would be quite easy, and not unjustified, to call this 'a return to outmoded and obsolete forms of bourgeois democracy', a criticism often heard in official sources when the idea of opposition is broached. Essentially, it would be only an attempt to bring back the mummified remnants of the pre-February political forces—which were even then very questionable.

THAT all these concepts are so spiritless seems to be due to one fact—none of them makes a true choice possible. Be frank. One can talk about democracy seriously only when people have an opportunity to elect freely those who are to govern them. This again assumes the existence of at least *two comparable alternatives.* That is to say, two equal and mutually independent political forces, both of which have the same chance of becoming the leading force in the country, if the people so decide.

In other words, as long as it is modern in our country to recognize the existence of the Communist Party as a party, the demand for a

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second political party as its full-fledged and dignified partner in the 'competition for power', and as the full guarantee of its control from without, will also be modern. To my mind the only truly logical, and indeed, in our circumstances effective way (naturally, it is possible that someone might convince me of a better way) to reach the ideal of democratic socialism is a regenerated and socialist social structure patterned on the *two-party model.* As these, obviously, would not be parties based on class, with different economic and social programmes dictated by class, and thus conflicting interests, their relationship could be based on a historically new type of *coalition* and co-operation. While preserving full political independence in the carrying out of mutual control, these parties could at the same time be bound by agreement on the fundamental common aim—humane, socially just, and civilized self-awareness on the part of the nation via democratic socialism.

SO much then, on the subject of a 'second party'. In conclusion I would like to mention something I consider highly important: I am afraid that in the non-communist majority of the nation a broader and more active political force will never be formed unless it becomes possible to win a certain degree of basic *moral-political recognition* for the non-communist viewpoint, a recognition arising from the acceptance of certain evident truths, and manifested in certain unequivocal political actions aimed at the righting of wrongs which no one has so far attempted to put right. It seems to me that without this recognition —as an explicit moral basis for any further activity—the non-communists can never be fully confident of the possibility of success in their further undertakings. This should not surprise you: it is very difficult to commit oneself earnestly and in one's own way without a minimal guarantee that communist error is not, once and for all and fundamentally, different from non-communist truth. And if many a non-communist recognized communist error even when the communists did not have the slightest inkling that a fallacy existed, then those non-communists must be given credit, however unpalatable this may be; if this were not possible, it would mean that communists are a special type of supermen who—in principle—are always right even when they have made a mistake, while the non-communists—in principle—are always in error, even when they are right. In such circumstances non-communists would be really foolish to commit themselves on any point. If the communists have a right to err from time to time, the non-communists must have a right to be right sometimes; otherwise no useful purpose can be served.

Ivan Svitak: 'Banging One's Head Against the Wall' (Student, 10 and 17 April 1968)

PART IV: *The Nature of Current Changes*

1. Are we now witnessing a revolution or a revolt? A revolution implies structural changes in society, including changes in class relationships, changes in economic and political ties and the system of power mechanisms. A revolt or *putsch* is a change of guard which leaves structural problems and relationships untouched. Whether what we are

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now going through is the one thing, or the other, is something we shall decide ourselves. . . . The game is open in both directions.

2. The alternative represented by 'revolt' leaves us entirely cold. There is no reason to be excited about personnel changes. Sociologists and philosophers know that 'institutions are stronger than people' and that without the control mechanisms of public opinion every member of an *élite*, without exception, must degenerate. Antonin Novotny started off as the advocate of a liberal tendency. Young Poles are having to barricade themselves at the university against a man who was their national hero in 1956.

3. The second alternative, involving structural changes, is on the contrary very attractive, since it would point the way to an open socialist society, in other words, to a socialist democracy. But this lies a long way ahead, even if at the present moment it constitutes a nation-wide illusion due to the resignation of a few individuals. University students have no reason to endorse this illusion; they have on the contrary every reason to watch out for the counterfeit cards which will turn up in the course of the game that has begun, and whose stake is the character of the country we are going to be living in.

4. If we take an objective and critical look at the results of the first three months of our renaissance, we must note that, apart from the non-existence of censorship for the time being, no structural changes in the mechanism of totalitarian dictatorship have occurred. The monopoly of a single party in Czechoslovakia's political life continues unchanged, and none of the normal processes by which, in a democracy, the political will of the people is expressed exist so far.

5. The hierarchical concept of state and social organizations, guided from a single centre, continues unmodified. This concept is incompatible with democracy, the essential characteristic of which is that a political will is formed by a number of social processes in which the individual components of society play relatively independent roles. At the ideological level, accordingly, there is competition between different value systems and political programmes; at the level of state power, there are the mutual constraints of legislative, executive and judicial authority (i.e. parliament, government and an independent judiciary); while finally at the level of economic and civic activity the various interest groups, civil service and public opinion play their separate parts.

6. At present there is only one element which justifies hope in a process of democratization, namely, the genuine manifestation of public opinion. It is against this, therefore, that the conservative forces will direct their counter-attacks at the earliest opportunity, by appealing for moderation and offering new economic programmes and new personalities instead of basic political changes. It must be our endeavour, on the contrary, to make full use of the permitted limits of freedom so as to enforce the holding of democratic elections as a further step in our progress toward becoming a European socialist state.

7. This progress is possible only if we solve the basic conflict within the contemporary Czechoslovak state, which has nothing at all to do with the relation between the two peoples, but with the mechanisms of totalitarian dictatorship. The bureaucracy serving this dictatorship has destroyed the cult of Stalin, but has retained unaltered the power

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structure of Stalinism including the personnel networks and the policy of cultural *dirigisme*. We must liquidate this dictatorship, or it will liquidate us.

8. Liquidation of the machinery of totalitarian dictatorship and totalitarian mentality is a precondition for achieving democratic socialism. Totalitarian dictatorship is our Enemy Number One. We have enough heads and hands to achieve a programme of socialist freedom; we also have an abundance of *aparatchiks* ready to prevent it. To the questions 'Whence, whither and in whose company?' the short answer is: 'From Asia to Europe, on our own.'

9. That means: From totalitarian dictatorship to an open society, to the liquidation of the power monopoly and to the effective control of a power *élite* by means of a free press and public opinion. From the bureaucratic management of society and a culture of 'official cutthroats' (to use Wright Mills's phrase) to the implementation of basic human and civic rights at least up to the standards of bourgeois democracy in Czechoslovakia. In the company of a workers' movement without its *aparatchiks*, of the middle classes minus the groups of willing collaborators of dictatorship, and of the intelligentsia in the van. It is the intellectuals of this country who must put in their claim to lead an open socialist society in the direction of democracy and humanism, if we are to abandon the irrational dialectics of arbitrary power.

10. The hallmark of current changes is that no fundamental changes have occurred at all, and the mechanisms of totalitarian dictatorship remain untouched. All that has come about is freedom of the press and a certain hope of democratic elections and a restructuring of power functions in the state. We are not interested in mere changes of office-holders, nominated by a most undemocratic procedure. What we are interested in is a lasting process of democratization, a permanent transformation of our totalitarian dictatorship into a European system with a democratic form of government.

IN PART VI, on 'Special Characteristics of Contemporary Events', Svitak notes that Czechoslovakia is only one—and the latest—of east European countries to undergo radical changes in abandonment of the original 'universal model' of communist revolution. Crucial features of the change in her particular case are (a) that the 'democratization process' is being directed from above; (b) that it has an unprecedented class character; and (c) that it offers a new role to the intelligentsia and middle classes. The process is not of course an expression of the *people's* will, but a deliberately managed extension of political participation by the public—a kind of 'rationing procedure' as gradual as the 'salami tactics' by which the same ruling *élite* in former days liquidated its political and social rivals. The rationing procedure is not ideal, but it is 'a practicable route to the gradual transformation of a totalitarian dictatorship in circumstances which make the creation of a genuine democracy impossible. *Managed democratization* breaks down the old mechanisms of Stalinism without dangerously threatening the very bases of a socialist system of society. This is its significance as a method usable not only by Western communist parties but also appropriate to the further democratization of the Eastern bloc, above all the USSR.'

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'For the time being', Svitak notes however, 'the democratization process is impinging only on the power *élite* and a narrow stratum of intellectuals, students and writers. . . . The rest of the population continues to be manipulated in the old way, and democratization only impinges on their awareness. Democracy is being foisted upon the masses in the same way as dictatorship was foisted upon them before, that is, without their direct participation. Though the process has no clear-cut class basis yet, it is noticeable that its loudest support comes from the young and the intellectuals, particularly students; and the motive force comes not from the working class but from a small group of communist intellectuals relying on widespread public support, and from the Party apparatus. The support given by the middle classes may give the impression that the changes are being made in their interest. But in fact these changes are immediately required to defend the living standards of the workers and of most of the public. . . . The intelligentsia is not carrying out a revolution for its own sake, but for society's sake, which is a great asset.'

PART VIII, 'Practical Hints', is a political decalogue addressed to Svitak's student audience. A short summary follows:

1. In the age of dictatorships, do not think in terms of classical liberal ideology but of the world of reality and real needs.
2. See politics as a matter of reason, interests and efficiency; do not be swayed by emotions, but calculate the optimal variant of behaviour in the manner of strategic games theory.
3. Do not conform to the age; live in fertile tension with it. You are responsible for your own world.
4. Beware of journalistic clichés. The so-called 'deformations' of socialism are perfectly normal phenomena of dictatorship, which have to be extirpated—along with the whole system of dictatorship.
5. Do not trust theories which excuse past mistakes on grounds of 'common practice of the time' or of the 'inevitability of dictatorship', and any other theories which eliminate individual responsibility.
6. Do not regard the historic personalities of the past two decades as people who 'acted under the pressure of circumstances', but as unpunished miscreants—with due regard to their measure of responsibility for the processes of devastation which they directed.
7. Beware of utopian, unrealistic blueprints. Recipes for extending freedom can easily end up by restricting it.
8. Be critical pupils of Karl Marx, who . . . based his policies on the fundamental interests of the working class. . . . The conception of a party as a decision-making *élite*, foisting its ideas on the masses, was due to the Russian *narodniki* and to Lenin; many Marxists criticized it from the start.
9. Never forget that Marx wanted to extend civic rights, and to make formal rights real ones—not to abolish them.
10. Do not let yourselves be brainwashed by mass communication media, by the 'language of non-thought' or by any of the numerous propagandists and missionaries offering up new mistakes as a way of ending the old ones. Do not believe them. 'Believe in yourselves.'

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POLAND: THE END OF THE POST-OCTOBER ERA

A. Ross Johnson

ON 11 March, the Czechoslovak Minister of the Interior, Kudrna, publicly apologized for the militia's suppression of the Strahov dormitory riots last October; that same Monday, the militia in Warsaw for the third day employed considerable violence to end student riots. A few days before, First Secretary Dubcek had assured Czech and Slovak intellectuals of their key role in a transformed political system; leading Polish intellectuals, accused of instigating the student unrest, were subject to vicious verbal attacks and, in one case, a beating. Czechoslovak publicists affirmed that the development of a democratic political system incorporating all the guarantees of individual freedoms found in the First Republic was necessary for a 'mature industrial socialist society'; Polish ideologues revived anachronistic warnings of 'integral democracy' and 'abstract freedom'. Such contrasts could be drawn at length, but these three should serve to emphasize the dichotomy between political developments in Prague and in Warsaw in spring 1968 which led Warsaw students to write 'Long Live Czechoslovakia' on their banners and the Polish regime to expel two Czechoslovak journalists. With the January Central Committee Plenum, Czechoslovakia seemed to have taken the decisive step away from Leninist rule, quickly outpacing Yugoslavia in several spheres. In Poland, in contrast, repression of the March student demonstrations was followed by a refusal on the part of the regime to meet student demands, coupled with a tortured attempt to explain the unrest as the work of a cabal of bankrupt Jewish communist politicians, reactionaries, and zionists. The subsequent massive anti-semitic propaganda campaign (unprecedented in the Soviet orbit since the days of the 'Doctors' Plot') resulted in large-scale dismissals of important officials and was an ominous sign of a threatened return to some of the worst aspects of the pre-1956 era.

THE Polish 'March' was compounded of two distinct elements: massive student demonstrations (the course and background of which were generally clear) and the major leadership crisis which followed (about which the evidence remains scanty, and analysis, therefore, tentative and speculative). The roots of the former may be traced back to the early sixties, when an opposition group of politically conscious Warsaw secondary school and University students coalesced in a number of discussion clubs, including the 'Seekers of Contradictions', singled out in later regime attacks. Most of these 'commandos', as they were known in Warsaw, came from pre-war communist families, often (but by no means uniformly) of Jewish origin, and many were children of important state or Party officials. Examples are Karol

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Modzelewski, grandson of Poland's first post-war Foreign Minister, Andrzej Duracz, son of a wartime communist resistance hero, Adam Michnik, son of a pre-war communist and brother of a military judge, and the daughters of Politbureau members Edward Ochab and Zenon Kliszko.

The reaction of these students to Poland's 'little stabilization' was not one of apathy or opportunism, but a fierce, morally derived, and still ideologically conditioned desire for a change in the political system, reminiscent in some ways of the earlier revisionists of 'October'. The best-known programme to emerge from the group was the 'Open Letter to the Party' of Karol Modzelewski and Jacek Kuron,[1] which called for the elimination of the 'class rule' of the communist bureaucracy and the establishment of 'workers' democracy' by means of the true proletarian revolution—the first such internal *revolutionary* critique of a ruling communist party since Stalin suppressed the 'Left Opposition'. Yet it would be a mistake to view the 'Open Letter' as representative of the dissident students' views. Antoni Zambrowski, son of former Politbureau member Roman Zambrowski, drew up at the demand of a Party control commission a quite different, 'revisionist' programme envisaging evolutionary change of the existing system, with proposals inspired directly by the experience of Italian and Yugoslav communism.[2] Yet if they did not agree on the future, the 'commandos' were united in their rejection of the Gomulka system, and their tenacity in acting on their convictions can be documented: demonstrations of solidarity with Modzelewski and Kuron upon their arrest in 1965, repeated defiance of University disciplinary threats, continued influence in the Socialist Youth Union organizations at the faculty level, incidents during the 1966 May Day parade, and, most important, organization of the meeting on 21 October 1966 at which Professor Leszek Kolakowski reviewed critically the 10 years since 'October'—the speech which resulted in his expulsion from the PUWP. Further disciplinary measures against several student leaders after that meeting again did not have the desired effect; in early 1967, 1,000 signatures were collected on a petition protesting against the suspension of Michnik from the University.

Kolakowski's dismissal from the Party also resulted in letters of protest from 22 prominent writers—a quarter of the membership of the basic Party organization of the Warsaw branch of the Writers' Union. When their criticism proved to be of no avail, many resigned or were themselves expelled from the Party. Their protest showed the extent to which Party writers, too, had been infected by the dissatisfaction with Party cultural policy expressed by non-Party intellectuals in the 'Letter of the 34' of March 1964. This helped explain how the Warsaw branch of the Writers' Union could remain the institutional locus of opposition to Party cultural policies after the Thirteenth Plenum,

[1] J. Kuron and K. Modzelewski, *List otwarty do partii* (Paris, Instytut literacki, 1966).
[2] Text in *Kultura* (Paris), no. 1/2, 1968, pp. 122–26.

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demanding in a resolution of May 1965, for example, in response to trials of such dissident writers as Melchior Wankowicz and Jan Miller, the abolition of the Small Penal Code.

IN early 1968 the two lines of intellectual dissent merged again after Kazimierz Dejmek's production of Mickiewicz's *Dziady* was banned from the stage of the National Theatre, ostensibly because of the 'anti-Soviet' reactions of the audience. Other plays were also threatened: the staging of Balucki's *Hard Times* was reportedly delayed, for example, solely because of the possible critical implication of its title in Poland in 1968. Over 200 prominent writers and other intellectuals reacted by petitioning for an extraordinary session of the Warsaw branch of the Writers' Union on 29 February. The course of that meeting confirmed that the Party had lost even negative control of the organization; the vote for a resolution critical of Party cultural policy was 245, the vote for the Party's counter-resolution, 124. The debate on the resolutions showed the extent of the intellectuals' bitterness: Stefan Kisielewski attacked the 'dictatorship of ignoramuses' in cultural affairs; Jerzy Andrzejewski broke his public silence of many years to denounce the restriction of cultural freedom; and many others, too, including Pawel Jasienica and Antoni Slonimski, voiced their discontent. It was a portent of what was to follow that the meeting was dispersed when a 'workers' delegation' attempted to deliver a 'counter-resolution' of its own. Prior to the writers' meeting, a student demonstration on 31 January against the closing of *Dziady* had been broken up by the militia, and it was to protest against the expulsion from the University of two of the organizers of the 31 January march, Michnik and Henryk Szlajfer, that the mass meeting was called at Warsaw University for 8 March. During the intervening weeks, over 3,000 signatures were appended to a petition demanding their reinstatement.

The protest meeting of 8 March, attended by several thousand students, was transformed into a riot when reserve militiamen were sent to the University grounds to break it up. The students resisted, the militia itself was called in, and the ensuing violence sparked off three days of riots in Warsaw and protests in every provincial university town (the situation clearly having been the most tense in Cracow). Street demonstrations gave way to sit-in strikes, and only after three weeks, on 23 March, did this phase of student protest end as the last students left the buildings of the Warsaw Polytechnic. These demonstrations, the first since the closing of *Po prostu* in 1957, indicated a rapid political activization of a major segment of Poland's student youth (including the advancing of an almost inexhaustible supply of leaders, Michnik, Szlajfer, and the other 'ringleaders' singled out by the Party press having been arrested on the first day); the apathy of a large section of the students towards any form of political activity disappeared overnight. The demonstrations also showed that, while little had been heard of opposition student groups in provincial universities, they

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either had existed or such sentiments lay just beneath the surface, to be transformed into action by the events in Warsaw.

The demands of the numerous student resolutions were largely restricted to student grievances (release of arrested students, announcing who had called in the militia, correction of false press reports). They raised broader political questions only in terms of cultural freedom and respect for individual rights guaranteed by article 71 of the Polish Constitution, an indication that most of the students, no matter how great their dissatisfaction with 'Polish conditions', became involved, not in support for any specific programme, whether of Kuron and Modzelewski, Zambrowski, or anyone else, but in reaction to specific encroachments on cultural freedom and student rights. Far from being 'anti-socialist' (as the regime at least initially maintained), the resolutions contained neither an overt challenge to the political system itself nor endorsement of specific interests of workers or other segments of society, and for its part, the non-student population displayed an attitude of passive sympathy, but (with such exceptions as food baskets for the sit-in demonstrators and collections to pay student fines), not active participation or support. This limitation of the students' demands could be taken as a sign of a poverty of conceptual alternatives to existing institutions and policies among the mass of students. At the same time, it was a measure of the students' political maturity that they did not make an impossible attempt to create artificially a non-existing 'revolutionary situation'. Even more striking was their self-discipline; not one anti-Soviet slogan was reported by Western correspondents, in spite of the widespread but unjustified tendency still to blame Moscow for the policies of the Polish communists.

An observer who relied for his information after 8 March solely on the Polish mass media would have come to a different conclusion, namely, that a conspiracy of discredited Stalinist politicians, revisionist intellectuals and gilded youth of Jewish origin, supported abroad by international zionism, West German revanchism, and other nefarious imperialists, had plotted the student unrest as a frontal challenge to the political system and its leaders, and that weeding out their mentors was therefore of far greater importance than disciplining the rebellious student leaders. *Trybuna Ludu* of 11 March selectively listed student leaders to emphasize their Jewish origin and the important state offices of their parents. The Pax daily *Slowo Powszechne* of the same date and *Kurier Polski* (nominally the Democratic Party daily) of 12 March joined forces to denounce as the 'organizers' of the student unrest prominent intellectuals who had criticized the Party at the 29 February Writers' Union meeting, Jasienica, Slonimski and Kisielewski in particular, and to castigate as the ultimate 'inspirers' such 'bankrupt politicians' of the Stalinist era as Stefan Staszewski and Roman Zambrowski (who, in fact, played a positive role in 1956 and were subsequently removed from the Party leadership for their excessive 'liberalism'). These charges immediately became the object of a massive

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propaganda campaign waged by the mass media, a major feature of which was the daily reporting of hundreds of resolutions of 'workers' and of Party and state organizations demanding the 'purge' and 'exemplary punishment' of zionists, political firebrands, and other enemies, 'no matter what their position'. The content of this campaign (including the total absence of any attacks on the Church hierarchy) left no doubt that indeed the main issue was not how to respond to the student unrest but an intra-Party power struggle of proportions last seen in Poland in 1956.

SINCE his return to power 12 years ago, Gomulka's system of rule has been based on the use of his personal authority as the leader of the 'rightist-nationalist' deviation imprisoned during the Stalinist years to dominate opposed factional groupings and mutually hostile individuals in the supreme leadership of the PUWP. The elimination of such 'liberals' as Jerzy Morawski from leading positions and their replacement by such former Stalinists as Kazimierz Witaszewski and Julian Tokarski precluded the evolution of the political system in line with the spirit of 'October'; nevertheless, this did not mean that the neo-Natolinist faction had been returned to power. Gomulka continued to use the former Stalinists, and not vice versa. The same held for the 'Partisans' around General Mieczyslaw Moczar, whose effort in the early 1960s to win a seat in the Politbureau was frustrated by Gomulka at the Fourth Congress in 1964, although the former Natolinist Ryszard Strzelecki, CC Secretary in charge of cadres since July 1963, was promoted to the Politbureau in late 1964. Other groups continued to be represented in the Party's supreme bodies—the ex-socialists around Cyrankiewicz, Silesian First Secretary Gierek, technicians such as Jedrychowski, the 'Gomulka group' itself—while members of the former Zambrowski, or 'Jewish liberal', faction still occupied second-level state posts. This forced co-operation of disparate forces reinforced the proclivity of Gomulka's own dogmatic pragmatism for policies which, while on the one hand avoiding any consistent effort to suppress intellectual dissent or confront more boldly the Church, as the hard-line elements might have urged, substituted indecision for any serious attempt at coping with the tasks of modernizing Polish society.

The dynamic forces in this constellation were the hard-liners (the term is used in the absence of a more adequate one); the other groups fought an extended holding action. No attempt can be made here to trace the history of these factional groupings[3]; in the context of the present leadership crisis, however, it is necessary to stress the special importance of the matter of Jewish origin in the division between the neo-Natolinists and the 'Partisans', on the one hand, and their opponents on the other.[4] The Natolin faction emerged in 1956 as a group of

[3] A useful survey is J. F. Brown, *The New Eastern Europe* (Praeger, New York, 1966), pp. 50–64.

[4] As stressed by Witold Jedlicki, in his 'Jews and Boors', *Kultura*, no. 12, 1962.

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Stalinists who attempted to use anti-semitism as a major weapon in a power struggle with the inchoate 'Pulawy' group, many of the leading members of which were 'Moscowite' Jewish communists who, motivated primarily by belated moral revulsion at their behaviour after 1948, adopted a more liberal outlook. For members of the faction who (unlike Kazimierz Mijal and his later pro-Chinese supporters) abandoned Stalinism *per se* after 1956 and again began to play an important role in the *apparat* after about 1959, any communist of Jewish origin continued to be classified as a 'liberal' enemy. The core of the later Partisan faction, 'domestic' communist underground fighters persecuted during the *Gomulkowszczyzina*, could focus their perceived sense of injustice on both the Soviet ties and Jewish origin of leading 'Moscowites'. Expecting Bierut's death to clear the way for their return to political life and bureaucratic sinecures, they coalesced into a faction when, even after consolidating his power following 'October', Gomulka failed to carry out the large-scale purge they expected. Thereafter the 'Partisans' attempted to take over as many individual positions in the state and Party bureaucracy as possible, using as a major weapon an anti-semitic whisper campaign, and achieved control of the security apparatus and made considerable gains in the organs of mass communication.

The student unrest in March provided the opportunity for a renewed major challenge to the Gomulka system by the hard-liners. The precondition for their move would seem to have been Gomulka's address to the trade union congress last June, in which, in the wake of the Arab-Israeli war, he warned of the danger of a 'fifth column' of pro-Israeli Polish Jews. Prior to that speech Gomulka had never displayed a trace of anti-semitism, indeed, he had quietly made possible the emigration to Israel in the late 1950s of large numbers of Polish Jews returning from Siberian prison camps. His remarks can perhaps best be interpreted as a reaction to the widespread sympathy (by no means confined to Polish Jews) for the Israeli cause on the part of the population, for him a display of inadmissible opposition to Party policy on a major 'internationalist' issue. Whatever the explanation, his remarks initiated an 'anti-zionist' propaganda campaign. In typical Gomulka fashion, only a few minor journalists of Jewish origin lost their jobs immediately (the more far-reaching purge in the Armed Forces, particularly the Air Defence Command, was not directly related, as the victims were not of Jewish origin and were apparently guilty of criticizing Soviet weapons and military tactics rather than of pro-Israeli sympathy *per se*). Yet if Gomulka still appeared to be in full control, he had voided one of the most important 'zones of silence' so characteristic of his system and essential for its perpetuation, and thereafter the hard-liners could with greater boldness and credibility raise charges of 'anti-Party' attitudes against their political and personal enemies—communists of Jewish origin almost by definition, but also many other

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real or suspected opponents, including former 'liberals' and ex-socialists. Their first real pay-off came in December with the dismissal of Leon Kasman as editor-in-chief of *Trybuna Ludu*, Leopold Unger as *de facto* editor of *Zycie Warszawy*, Jerzy Zarzycki as Chairman of the Warsaw National Council, and the replacement of Stanislaw Kociolek by his former deputy for propaganda, Jozef Kepa, as First Secretary of the Warsaw Party Committee.

GOMULKA'S anti-semitic speech and these personnel changes were the immediate background to the events following 8 March. It may be that the hard-liners consciously forced a showdown, even causing *Dziady* and other plays to be banned—a move intended to reflect on their enemies, Minister of Culture Lucjan Motyka and CC Secretary Artur Starewicz especially, in charge of the 'cultural sector'—and intentionally exacerbating the student unrest in order to create a crisis atmosphere. This interpretation remains open to question, but what seems indisputable is that the student unrest provided the immediate excuse for the neo-Natolinist faction, headed by Strzelecki, who directly controlled the Party *apparat*, and the 'Partisans' headed by General Moczar, who controlled the militia and key posts in the mass media, to launch a drive for decisive power in the PUWP. Their immediate objective was to oust second-level officials (especially those of Jewish origin) in the state bureaucracy, using as a pretext the involvement of their children in the student demonstrations. Thus press attacks explicitly charged the fathers with responsibility for the guilt of their sons and daughters.

The massive propaganda campaign utilized by the hard-liners in their drive for greater power focused initially, as already noted, on the purge of 'zionists'; typical was a resolution of the Party *activ* in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, warning that 'there can be no compromise with cosmopolitans and chauvinists' and that it was 'impossible to tolerate their activity in any responsible position'.[5] While demanding that dismissals be ordered by the central Party and state organs, the hard-liners concentrated on encouraging basic Party cells to take matters into their own hands, to adopt a stand 'without waiting for directives "from the top"', and thus to confront the centre with *faits accomplis*.[6] As the number of dismissals mounted, most of them the direct result of such pressure 'from below', cultural and educational institutions such as *Film Polski*, the State Scientific Publishing House (PWN), and the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) were subjected to intensive criticism, and many prominent intellectuals and professionals, particularly of Jewish origin, lost their jobs and some were expelled from the Party. But state organs too—the Ministries of Foreign Affairs,

[5] *Trybuna Ludu*, 26 March 1968.

[6] Kazimierz Kakol, in *Pravo i Zycie*, 7 April 1968. 'Decisions taken spontaneously by basic Party organizations' in Warsaw were elsewhere praised for having 'outpaced administrative decisions' (*Trybuna Mazowiecka*, 9 April 1968).

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Finance, and Culture, to cite only three—as well as one Party body, the Institute of Party History, came under fire, not just to weed out 'revisionists' from public life, but aiming to remove eventually the major opponents of the 'Partisans' or their factional allies in charge of the institutions under attack.

Ultimately, of course, such criticism of state bodies reflected on the political leadership of the Politbureau and Gomulka himself. But the hard-liners did not limit themselves to inferences. Gomulka's policy after 1956 was explicity subjected to criticisms in the press; a pioneer in this respect was the 'Partisan' spokesman Kakol who, ignoring the taboo on discussions of 'October', lamented that the positive changes initiated in 1956 had been blocked through a combination of bureaucratic incompetence and inertia. Calling for the development of 'socialist democracy', which would harness the creative energies of Polish youth, he challenged Gomulka by name to 'offer an answer as to the further prospects of development'.[7] Many such criticisms placed great stress on the affirmation of Polish patriotism; the 'Partisan' claim to that cause was constantly asserted. Once the students' protests had ended, General Moczar tried to pose as their 'sympathetic' adviser. He publicly affirmed his leadership of the extremist campaign in a unique personal interview[8] in which he attacked the *Large Encyclopedia*, published by PWN, and the weekly *Polityka*, and condemned former 'Moscowites' in the PUWP as 'politicians dressed in officers' uniforms'.

In their endeavour to exploit the student unrest in March to increase their power, the hard-liners in the PUWP leadership thus did not limit themselves to precipitating a purge, which in fact successfully eliminated many of their enemies in middle-level positions from public life, threatened certain of the latter's superiors, and brought about the dismissal of the head of state, Edward Ochab. The 'Partisan' faction continued to promote its image as the defender of Polish patriotism while initiating a public discussion on shortcomings of the Gomulka system itself. Taken at face value, the criticisms of bureaucratic ineptitude, blocked careers, and political and economic stagnation were laudable and could be supported by Poles of widely differing political persuasions, from the liberal Catholics to liberal 'revisionists'; many of the same points had also been made earlier by such disparate critics of Gomulka's policy as Kuron and Modzelewski, Antoni Zambrowski, and even Mijal's 'Communist Party of Poland', in tirades broadcast by Tirana Radio. Yet it was not only their authorship which made such criticisms suspect. They invoked 'October', while rejecting its spirit; such key matters as the role of the Party and intellectual freedom were of course passed over in silence by the hard-liners.

Such criticisms were no doubt an attempt on the part of the 'Partisans' to broaden their support beyond their institutional bases in the

[7] *Prawo i Zycie*, 24 March 1968.
[8] *Trybuna Ludu*, 13 April 1968.

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security forces and mass media; it was bound to evoke a certain response among ambitious young Poles whose careers had been thwarted by the dead weight of the bureaucracy and who were eager to see Poland 'moving again'.

On the other hand, the 'Partisans'' appeal also raised several problems. The bureaucracy, after all, was hardly composed of 'zionists'; how could the 'Partisans' promise its rejuvenation when many of their own supporters and neo-Natolinist allies already occupied key positions? There seems to be a fundamental divergence of interests between the radicals and the conservatives among the hard-liners, between the 'Young Turks' among the 'Partisans' (people like Myslek, Gontarz, and Waclawek), who would exploit 'spontaneity' and appeal demagogically to the working-class, using the 'pressure from below' à la Chinoise in their drive to power, and the segment of the *apparat* which would welcome an end to the half-measures of Gomulka's rule, but would continue to place primary importance on perpetuating itself as the only legitimate vehicle of political activity, discarding the 'Red Guard' tactics. Whatever the immediate tactical benefits, there was also some danger in overplaying the slogans of positive change in Poland. That might be possible for Ceausescu in Rumania, lacking a cohesive, politically engaged intelligentsia ready to exert strong pressure for change from below, but it is more risky in Poland, where a rebellious student youth and a politically articulate cultural *élite* would like to see any such slogans put to the test. Finally, if the 'Partisans' continued to promote 'patriotism', might not even their pseudo-nationalism become suspect in Moscow? These were, however, long-term considerations; of more immediate interest was the reaction of the rest of the Party leadership.

GOMULKA himself was silent on the student unrest for almost two weeks. When he addressed the Warsaw Party *activ* on 19 March, his words confirmed the supposition that the public campaign against 'zionists' and 'bankrupt politicians' had not been his creation. Attacking the leaders of the student demonstrations and the dissident intellectuals in the sharpest terms, he shifted the blame for the riots to reactionaries and enemies of the Polish-Soviet alliance, and seemed to dissociate himself from a comprehensive purge. Zionism, he declared, while a hostile force, was not a threat to the perpetuation of socialism in Poland, and charges could not be made against an individual without the prior approval of the appropriate body. A similar approach characterized the speeches of Kliszko and Cyrankiewicz in the Sejm on 10 April. While going considerably further than had Gomulka in endorsing a systematic purge, both leaders in effect maintained that each case had to be considered on its own merits, and warned against an exaggerated 'anti-zionist' witch hunt.

Yet the stand of all three top Politbureau members could be called 'moderate' only in a very relative sense; not even Gomulka disavowed

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'anti-zionism' or opposed a Party purge, but sought only to limit and channel them for his own purposes. This fact alone suggested the extent to which, by the spring of 1968, Gomulka's position had become dependent on the hard-liners and his views compatible with theirs. Given these two interrelated factors, the hard-liners could both impose a political debate on the origins of the 'March events' on the Party and determine its terms of reference; if called upon to justify their behaviour, they could credibly argue that they were only urging the consistent implementation at a time of crisis of principles accepted earlier by Gomulka himself.

One of the few press organs which refrained from the 'anti-zionist' campaign was the weekly *Polityka*. The journal had been a long-standing 'Partisan' target; now it was denounced by *Trybuna Ludu* for glorifying economic managers and criticized personally by Moczar for opposing the 'patriotic education' of the youth. Yet *Polityka's* editor-in-chief, Rakowski, rejected the criticism as unfounded, in a manner implying he had support higher up; this was one sign that Gomulka would still attempt to resist the hard-liners' onslaught. At the Sejm session in April, he demonstrated that he was still in a position to control appointments to top state bodies, when Ochab was replaced as Chairman of the Council of State by Gomulka's close supporter, Minister of Defence Marian Spychalski, and the latter was succeeded, not by the 'Partisan' candidate, General Grzegorz Korczynski, but by General Wojciech Jaruzelski, a professional army officer having no evident connexions with the 'Partisans'.

These defensive moves on Gomulka's part were followed by the first counter-offensive step on 17 April, when Warsaw First Secretary Kepa made a speech which, while avoiding any hint of a conciliatory attitude towards the dissident students and intellectuals, attacked such excesses in the Party as 'hasty generalizations concerning certain alarming elements in our economic and social life'; 'social demagogy'; the attempt to gain popularity 'through a search for applause, through "playing to the gallery"'; and 'vulgar mudslinging'. At the same time, Kepa emphasized the importance of 'democratic centralism', and insisted that the May Day festivities in 1968 had to be organized as a show of support for Gomulka's personal leadership. In fact, the celebrations in Warsaw passed without serious incident, as a manifestation of Party loyalty to Gomulka. Yet dismissals from state and Party posts with anti-semitic overtones continued, and there were other signs that the hard-liners' challenge to Gomulka had by no means ended.

AN important, if not easily definable role in the present leadership crisis has been played by the Silesian First Secretary, Edward Gierek, generally looked upon as an economic rationalizer, whose tight control over the Silesian industrial basin had won him the title of the 'Polish Tshombe'. The first Politbureau member to speak on the student unrest, Gierek, in a hard-hitting speech on 14 March, endorsed

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the hard-liners' call for a purge of their former 'liberal' opponents, maintaining that 'The dirty scum which floated on the vortex of the October events 11 years ago has not completely been removed from the tide of our life'. Gierek thus dashed any illusions that he might act as head of a moderate counterforce to the hard-liners in the immediate crisis. His speech remains a puzzle. Confronted with the prospect of the breakdown of the old factional balance in the PUWP leadership, and perhaps even overestimating the hard-liners' strength, Gierek may have resolved to promote his own interests by competing on their own terms for supporters of Moczar and Strzelecki, but whatever the motivation of that speech, his own position was strengthened.

Thereafter, Gierek returned to his pet theme of economic rationalization in a speech in Zabrze on 30 March, while the editor-in-chief of his house organ, *Trybuna Robotnicza*, held out to Poland's youth the prospect of engaging its talents in the cause of the scientific-technical revolution common to the entire modern world. This, and not 'romantic raptures of the heroes of old', was the essence of modern patriotism—an unmistakable challenge to the 'Partisans'' attempt to monopolize the issue.[9] Subsequently Gierek devoted himself to control of his Party organization and ignored the framework of political debate imposed on the Party by the hard-liners, while at the same time further elaborating his alternative 'technocratic' platform, demonstrating that, whatever his tactical moves at a given moment, Gierek would continue to speak only for himself and would surely claim an important role in any Party leadership.

FOUR months after it began, the acute leadership struggle in Poland had not been resolved. Only the Fifth Party Congress would permit a reliable measure of the hard-liners' gains; whatever their future gains, however, their position after the purge was stronger than ever before, and thus their goal, the assumption of decisive power, was within reach, although it was likely to be achieved only on the basis of some kind of alliance. In that potential alliance, the tensions between the radical 'Partisan' and conservative *apparatchik* elements of the hard-line camp, and the external liabilities which would result from the effort to introduce a more repressive system of rule in Poland, made it probable that, if they came to power, the hard-liners could not maintain for long a unified coercive system of rule. But given their control of the security forces and the political dynamism they had demonstrated after 8 March, their chances for the long-run are now better. They have not, however, succeeded in maintaining the momentum of their advance, although they registered some successes at the Twelfth Central Committee Plenum of the Party. General Moczar became the candidate-member of the Politbureau, a post less elevated than his political ambition indicates. The

[9] Maciej Szczepanski, 'The Modern Form of Patriotism', *Trybuna Robotnicza*, 23–24 March 1968.

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tactics of Gomulka and his followers at the Plenum consisted of an attempt to shift the Party offensive from 'zionists' to 'revisionists'. While generally endorsing the 'anti-zionist' purge, Gomulka and Kliszko deplored some 'excesses', presumably committed by their opponents. The 'Theses' prepared by the Central Committee for the Fifth Party Congress are another indication. They hardly mention the 'zionists' and concentrate their fire on 'revisionism' as the main danger, though they indicate that 'in our conditions revisionism is closely connected with nationalism and cosmopolitanism, as well as with a servile attitude to the West'. They resuscitate in a veiled form the old Stalinist thesis about the sharpening of the ideological struggle following the annihilation of the former ruling classes:

> It would be a mistake to conclude that in these socialist countries where antagonistic class contradictions do not exist, the socialist regime may not be threatened.

The 'Partisan' pressure and Gomulka's defence tactics made it virtually certain that the Fifth Party Congress would mark the passing of the end of the post-October era. The cultural and intellectual freedom won in 1956 had been slowly whittled down by Gomulka; now, however, the freedoms which remained threatened to be abolished entirely. A return to the *status quo ante*, in terms of previous factional relationships in the Party leadership, could be ruled out; Gomulka cannot reassert his control through the old factional balancing. The average age of the Politbureau at present is over 58. If there is a rejuvenation of the Party leadership, it will bring in the hard-liners, not the 'liberals' who have long since been ousted. In time, given this rejuvenation, mass aspirations for positive social change might again find influential spokesmen in the Party leadership, and Poland could begin again where it left off in 1957. However, at present Gomulka would seem to have contributed himself to the destruction of the previous balance. The jockeying for positions will continue after the Twelfth Plenum, but only the Fifth Party Congress will show the outcome of the current struggle for power.

Whatever the outcome of the leadership crisis precipitated by the student unrest in March, any temptation to greet with relief the passing of the post-October regime would have to be tempered by the melancholy thought that it would be replaced by an even more illiberal one. The tragedy of Polish communist politics in 1968 was that, while Poland needed a Dubcek, not even a 'centrist', like Cernik in Czechoslovakia, could be seen on the horizon.

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DOCUMENTS:
POLAND

When the threat of the 'Czechoslovak infection' began to be felt, the Polish communists rediscovered the old Russian 'Black Hundred' idea of dealing with popular dissatisfaction by making Jews the scapegoats. Anti-'zionist' and anti-'cosmopolitan' denunciations were used to purge the liberal and Jewish elements from the intelligentsia and to isolate them from the wider public. These moves were obviously also a weapon in the intra-Party struggle. The originality of the anti-'zionist' campaign in Poland consisted not in the fact of implementing anti-semitism in the name of internationalism—this has already been done under Stalin at the time of the 'Doctors' Plot'—but in doing it with even greater ideological mendacity. The intellectual hero of the Polish 'October' in 1956, Leszek Kolakowski, was attacked in Trybuna Ludu *at the same time as the old Stalinists who were blamed for the 'errors of the era of personality cult'. He was expelled from Warsaw University, as was Wlodzimierz Brus who was blamed for the Polish economic troubles, although his advocacy of economic reform (which was never implemented) only earned him the hostility of the diehards who were now attacking him. This, ironically, at the time when his Czechoslovak colleague, Ota Sik, has become a Deputy Prime Minister. Both were advocates of economic reform, and Professor Ota Sik in his book,* Plan and Market under Socialism, *gave 'the greatest credit' for the theoretical ideas underlying it to 'the Polish economist, W. Brus', whose contribution was 'particularly important'. The disingenuousness of the ideological functionaries of the regime can be gauged from the 'defence' of Rosa Luxemburg from Western 'falsifiers' in* Trybuna Ludu *(7 April 1968). It made a pointed reference to the Jewish origin of several writers abroad, but, needless to say, it did not stress that Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Marx himself were of Jewish origin. Among many protests abroad concerning the ousting of Kolakowski, Brus, and four other professors, from Warsaw University, it is interesting to note the statement by the editorial board of the Zagreb philosophical magazine,* Praxis (*published in* Vjestnik, *9 April 1968), in which it ironically asked whether the fact, constantly stressed, that some of those attacked in the press and purged 'have been people of Jewish origin' could be an aggravating circumstance in a socialist country?*

We publish below several excerpts from articles which give some insight into the real issues, the methods used, and the purposes pursued in this anti-'zionist' campaign. They make it quite clear that it was intertwined with the internal Party power struggle. The first of these documents is an eye-witness account of the Polish writers' meeting, every detail of which has subsequently been confirmed in the official Polish press. One of such articles is reproduced here. Another document, a resolution by Warsaw students, gives an idea of the character of their demands, as well as of their restraint and moderation. Their composite declaration (issued in Warsaw on 28 March 1968), which summed up their criticisms of the existing political, economic, and legal conditions in Poland, gave the following three points as being of their immediate concern:

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'1. Academic youth has the right and duty to demand the guarantee of legal activity for such a student political organization which will truly express the aims of academic circles.
'2. Such an organization should have a legal possibility of expressing and broadcasting its opinions. A particularly burning problem is the reactivization of a journal of students and young intelligentsia which will assure a special response to the political and social interests of young people. Journals at present pretending to perform these functions emphatically do not fulfil their tasks.
'3. The students' organization ought to be assured freedom of political action by, among other things, the creation of clubs and discussion centres. In view of the ideological and undeniably socialist character of the student movement, this freedom will be used within those limits that the socialist character of our state creates. However, it is necessary to emphasize, as strongly as possible, that the acceptance of the basic premises of socialism not only does not absolve one from discussion and reflection on the various ways of realizing these premises, but it even makes it obligatory.'

The official reaction to the student unrest can be glimpsed from the press excerpts reprinted below. There is little doubt that if Daniel Cohn-Bendit was not in Nanterre, but at Warsaw University, he would have been branded a 'zionist' instigator. As can be seen, Polish students tactfully dissociated themselves from both zionism and anti-semitism, but they were certainly not interested in Mao or Marcuse either. They were engaged, together with writers and academics, in the struggle for freedom on Czechoslovak lines, defending the same values.

POLISH WRITERS' MEETING

ON the day following the last performance of *Dziady* [1] at the National Theatre, many members of the Polish Writers' Union, indignant at this ban by the censorship and the intervention in theatrical affairs on the part of the highest Party authorities, decided to give public expression to their attitude at an extraordinary general meeting of the Warsaw branch of the ZLP (Polish Writers' Union). In accordance with the stipulations of its constitution, they began to collect signatures for a motion requesting the convening of an extraordinary meeting. In five days they collected 231 signatures, i.e. more than is required by statutory regulations. After the motion had been deposited with the executive of the branch, further signatures arrived from those writers who had been unable to sign earlier. Among the writers requesting an extraordinary general meeting there were nearly 40 Party members.

The motion was also signed by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Union, Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz. At first the cautious Chairman

[1] *The Forefathers*, a play by the Polish national poet, Adam Mickiewicz.

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tried to get out of this action which could be judged as insubordination by the authorities and the Party. But when pressed again he signed the motion with a resigned sigh. The day after he had given his signature he went abroad on 'very urgent' cultural business.

The motion calling for a meeting embarrassed that section of the Presidium of the Warsaw branch which has a loyalist attitude towards the authorities and the Party. But there was nothing to be done and—in accordance with the Union's constitution—a meeting had to be convened. Its date was set for 29 February 1968.

AS the day of the meeting approached, tension increased in the intellectual circles of the capital. The meeting became the chief topic of café conversation. Would a meeting actually be held? Would the writers be allowed to convene it? Perhaps the meeting would be closed as soon as it opened? On whose side would the majority be? Whom would the Party appoint as its representatives?

Strangers came up to writers and congratulated them on their courage, often expressing at the same time a deep concern as to what would happen, and what the Party's revenge would be.

The memorable Thursday arrived. The meeting started. The Chairman of the Warsaw branch, Wanda Zolkiewska, entered the hall, accompanied by the Director-General of the Ministry of Culture and Art, Stanislaw Witold Balicki.

Then followed the acceptance of the agenda of the meeting. Point one: an explanation by the Director-General of the Ministry of Culture of the banning of *Dziady*. Point two: the submitting of resolutions. After that—a discussion. The next point on the agenda: voting on the resolutions. And finally—questions from the floor.

The writers were interested to hear how the Ministry's representative would try to convince them as to the correctness of the decision to take *Dziady* off the stage.

Balicki began with a long historical lecture, which was received impatiently by the hall. Interest increased only when he reached the crux of the problem.

BALICKI spoke about the particularly threatening or dangerous—in the opinion of his superiors—passage in Dejmek's [2] staging, when from the darkness at the back of the stage the shackled Konrad emerged in a beam of light, walking towards the front of the stage, to the chant of an unseen chorus, begging for God's mercy.

He then admitted that Dejmek had been warned—without saying whether by the Ministry or by the Central Committee—of the political reservations concerning his production. As a result of repeated persuasion, Dejmek introduced certain modifications in the production, and deprived Konrad of his shackles. But this was not enough for the

[2] The producer of the play.

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Ministry, which from 1 January allowed *Dziady* to be performed only once a week, and bluntly forbade the attendance of school-children.

This statement provoked shouts of indignation and protest from the auditorium. But Balicki paid no attention, and continued to give an account of the Ministry's standpoint.

He said that finally on 16 January it was decided to take *Dziady* off by the end of the month. He tried to persuade the meeting that the performance of *Dziady* produced what he called 'demonstrations and excesses by a group of people of ill-will', and that these demonstrations were supposedly 'exploited and fomented by centres unfriendly to us'. The Ministry made its decision so as not to open the field for 'opposition demonstrations' in the theatre, and—as he put it with pathos—in order to 'protect Mickiewicz's greatness from abuse' and to protect the National Theatre from having its stage exploited for 'opposition tricks'. Balicki did not specify what opposition, nor against whom or what.

He ended his speech in the face of a growing tumult of indignation in the hall, in which the arguments of the Ministry's spokesman had produced a mood of growing tension. When he stepped down from the rostrum, instead of applause he received murmurs and even loud shouts of protest. From many parts of the hall people asked to be allowed to speak. The Chairman proposed that the list of speakers should be established and closed before the discussion began. This would make the course of the meeting smoother, since otherwise it could continue until the early morning. The hall expressed consent. Antoni Slonimski headed the list of speakers. Jerzy Putrament was last on the list.

THE resolution of the 'liberals' was submitted and read out by Andrzey Kijowski. There was no need to substantiate it, in view of the stormy applause from the audience. Even the Party men applauded, having first made sure that neither Lenart nor any of Putrament's adjutants were in ear-shot. The same thing would be repeated later, when many other liberal speakers were applauded. Here is the text of Kijowski's resolution:

> *Polish writers, gathered together on 29 February 1968, at an extraordinary general meeting of the Warsaw branch of the Writers' Union, disturbed by the ban on the performances of Mickiewicz's 'Dziady' on the stage of the National Theatre, affirm:*
> *1. The interference of the authorities which exercise supervision over cultural activity and artistic creativity, has been increasing and growing in strength for a considerable time. The interference concerns not only the texts of literary works, but also their distribution and reception.*
> *2. The system of censorship and the direction of cultural and artistic activity is arbitrary and covert—the powers of the individual authorities within it are undefined, as is also the method of appealing against their decisions.*

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3. This state of affairs threatens national culture, retards its development, deprives it of an authentic character, and indicates a progressive sterility. The ban on 'Dziady' is a particularly glaring example.

4. The views of the writers, presented in the form of resolutions and memoranda by the authorities of the Writers' Union and the leading representatives of the writers' world, have not up to now been taken into consideration.

Motivated by civic concern, we call upon the authorities of the Polish People's Republic to restore tolerance and creative freedom, in conformity with our age-old tradition.

We demand the reinstatement of Mickewicz's 'Dziady' directed by Kazimierz Dejmek, for the withdrawal of this play produced understandable bitterness among the inhabitants of the capital.

The Party resolution was submitted by the Party's present bard, Stanislaw Ryszard Dobrowolski. Evidently considering that elegance should be replaced by nonchalance, he outlined it with hand in his pocket. The resolution expressed regret at the decision to withdraw *Dziady* from the National Theatre, but at the same time it recognized that the Party's entire cultural policy was correct. It condemned the participation of the audience in the demonstrations 'inspired by the enemy' at the last performance of *Dziady*.

Dobrowolski's pronouncement was greeted with anaemic applause from the literary activists of the Party.

The young writer, Andrzej Mencwel, read out a resolution defending the students who took part in the demonstration at the National Theatre during the last performance of *Dziady* and later at the site of the Mickiewicz monument. There was a storm of applause in the hall, and shouts of 'Long live the students!'

Before the start of the discussion a question of a technical nature arose: how to vote—openly or secretly. Jasienica put forward the notion that the voting on the resolutions should be secret. It was generally known that during the days preceding the Congress intensive pressure had been brought to bear on Party writers to observe discipline in voting and to take up a position in accordance with the Party directives. Some non-Party members were threatened with the possibility of the withdrawal of their pensions, allowances and other forms of material aid if they supported the liberal resolution. It is not surprising, therefore, that Jasienica's motion was opposed by Putrament, who demanded that the vote should be open.

The formal motion was put to the vote. Then followed the first trial of strength.

There were 245 votes in favour of Jasienica's proposal, and only 108 in favour of Putrament's. A joyous uproar, in which only the Party activists, watching their colleagues with long faces, did not take part, burst out in the hall.

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THERE was silence when Antoni Slonimski took the stand.

First I would like to correct a certain inaccuracy made by Director Balicki. In his historical deductions the Director stated that even I—Antoni Slonimski—in my pre-war review of the opening night of Schiller's production of 'Dziady' allegedly wrote that though 'Dziady' constitutes a national heritage, nevertheless this heritage is an embarrassing one. Director Balicki was obviously in a hurry, for he shortened the judgment I made at that time. He shortened it by two words. At that time I wrote that 'Dziady' would be an embarrassing heritage for . . . dictators.

This was followed by stormy applause and loud laughter and everybody looked at Balicki, who was swallowing the exposure of his falsehood with a stony face and in silence.

Passing on to the heart of the matter, Slonimski referred to the famous 'Letter of the 34', stating that since the time it was written censorship and various kinds of administrative pressure have been applied with increasing strictness and things even came to such a pass that *Dziady* was removed from the repertoire of the first theatre in Poland.

Every stage director has the right to produce a play according to his own concept and his creative vision. Dejmek has displayed an original and at times striking interpretation of 'Dziady'. The ban on it is a proof of the activity of censorship and of the interference of administrative elements, which are trying to destroy the achievements of Polish culture. We are witnessing a dangerous escalation in the supression of freedom of speech.
Mr Balicki—Slonimski said further—*insinuated that at the famous meeting of our branch of the Polish Writers' Union on the question of the 'Letter of the 34'—in which Mr Kliszko participated—I allegedly threatened the use of machine-guns. This again is untrue. Many of those present here remember what I said. Having been personally attacked by Mr Kliszko I said: 'I cannot defend myself with any administrative means for I have none, just as I have no guns or militia battalions—all I have is the word.' Today the situation is the same. To defend the highest values of national culture we only have words.*

Here a frenetic ovation followed. When the applause subsided the writer spoke again.

Propaganda attributes the universal repugnance of society at the banning of 'Dziady' and the stir it aroused among the youth to the interference of some foreign elements. Which elements? In the past this was simple. In such cases everything was blamed on Judaeo-communism. In present day conditions the Jews are again being accused, but the former slogan is now rather embarrassing. So now one should probably blame 'Judaeo-anti-communism'.

Amidst loud laughter and prolonged applause Slonimski returned to his seat. The next speaker was a representative of the Party, Henryk

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Gaworski. His speech followed the Party line in stereotyped phrases, and in conclusion he naturally expressed support for Dobrowolski's resolution. Unnoticed by most of the audience, Gaworski left the stand. Suddenly there was silence. The distinguished poet and outstanding expert on Mickiewicz, Mieczyslaw Jastrun, the author of the well-known work entitled *Mickiewicz* appeared at the microphone. Jastrun's speech, beautiful and profound, made a great impression on the audience. He discussed various historical productions of *Dziady* and stressed the significance and the role of this play in Polish literature. He also stressed that Dejmek had the right to his own ideas as a producer, which he praised highly. The audience rewarded Jastrun with a great ovation.

THE audience also listened with attention and great interest to Pawel Jasienica, who began with a polemic against Balicki's thesis.

The removal of 'Dziady' from the stage is on the agenda of our meeting. Director Balicki maintains in his explanation, representing the attitude of the Ministry and the Party, that the reason for the decision to remove this masterpiece of our literature from the repertoire was allegedly the demonstrative and—as he interprets it—allusive applause of the public and the youth in the audience. It must be said that this is a deliberate distortion of the truth. It was just the opposite. At the performance of 'Dziady' on 30 January the applause of the audience exploded spontaneously for the very reason that it was known beforehand that this would be the last performance.

The whole of Warsaw knew about it. It was a secret to no one. This last performance was attended by people who even came from outside of Warsaw. Just for the reason that this was the last performance of 'Dziady' in Dejmek's excellent production the audience reacted more warmly than usual and the students with a spontaneity compatible with their age.

All those who attended this last performance can testify that there were no excesses on the part of the students, that they behaved with dignity. It did not hamper at all the actors in their play and the public in watching it.

What of it that the applause was more frequent and warmer than usual. After all there are no norms which lay down that this kind of applause and the time it lasts is of an anti-Party character or is aimed against the authorities.

After the performance, when they were already outside the theatre building, the students inscribed on only one modest banner the slogan: 'We are demanding further performances of "Dziady".' Is this an anti-state slogan? Can it destroy a strong system? What else did the youth do which was an offence?—it paid homage to the poet under his monument. This was considered to be such a dangerous act that the militia was put into action against these boys and girls. Many of them were detained. Some were punished in summary proceedings. Others are being threatened with court proceedings. The students were insulted, being called hooligans. We must lodge here the strongest protest against this.

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This is not all. In order to heap shame on the students, certain elements started distributing at the University, and even sending to private addresses, leaflets of a disgusting, anti-semitic nature. Colleagues! The instigators of this shameful composition tried to smear the student youth, insinuating that it is anti-semitic. Who is naïve enough to believe this? The Council of the University Philosophical Department has ascertained that these leaflets are not the work of the students but were distributed at the University as a provocation and came from outside.

Certain individuals in civilian clothes have investigated the students at the University collecting signatures for a petition calling for the resumption of the performances of 'Dziady'. They endeavoured to tear the lists with the signatures out of their hands. They even chased the students in the University Library.

Colleagues! Someone, for reasons known only to himself, is trying to bring upon our nation the stigma of anti-semitism. Lack of tolerance had an effect on Poland's affairs at the time of Voltaire, when the question of our religious intolerance was raised. I know this well as a historian. Nothing could do us greater harm today than to create in the eyes of the world the idea that we are a nation of anti-semites.

When Jasienica finished, applause and cries continued for a while. Among them were words of admiration for the students. A beautiful speech in the spirit of tolerance, freedom of speech and humanism was delivered by Artur Miedzyrzecki.

Any mention of the students was followed by spontaneous applause. There were many cries in honour of Czechoslovakia and its writers. In this mood the draft of a cable to the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, addressed to its Chairman, Eduard Goldstücker, was put forward. Here is the text.

To our comrades in the common struggle for socialism, which should not be a system of government in which power is the monopoly of the Party bureaucracy and a brake on the development of science and art, but a full expression of socialist democracy, making it possible for the individual to achieve the highest degree of freedom and activity—the extraordinary general meeting of the Polish Writers' Union—the Warsaw branch—on 29 February 1968—is sending fraternal greetings together with the hope that your and our demands—from the Polish October—will be achieved.

THE audience fell silent when the tall, youthful figure of Professor Leszek Kolakowski appeared on the stand.

The Professor, so popular in Warsaw, spoke about the mechanism of growing repression.

When the first, timid repressive acts are not resisted, they encourage their initiators to an ever greater scale of repression, which in practice begins to have no limit. Now in our country the scope of repression has spread so far that in fact all opposition has ceased.

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Few books are published and their authors no longer have the opportunity of reacting to and of counteracting effectively the prohibitions. We observe the constant destruction of science and the hampering of its road of development, the limitation of the free investigating spirit. What we have now in our country is not socialism, it has nothing in common with Marxism.

Despite its political sharpness, Kolakowski's speech was serious in tone. His ideas were formulated clearly and with precision. Time and time again his speech was interrupted by applause. When he mentioned the changes in Czechoslovakia the applause grew in intensity. When Leszek Kolakowski was leaving the stand he was given a long ovation. The applause continued after he had sat down. Embarrassed, he had to get up and motion the audience to be quiet.

ALL heads turned in the direction of the stand when Stefan Kisielewski appeared on it. Kisielewski sharply attacked censorship. He stressed that today censorship in Poland embraces practically everything. Just as the regulations of the Small Penal Code can be applied to everything. Censorship covers everything, from parliamentary speeches to obituaries and even visiting cards.

Not only do we have court sentences on our colleagues for works which have been printed, but there is also a case without precedent —a verdict for something which was never published. I mean Szpotanski's[3] *political satire. And what was in it?—jokes and satire. And yet all of us Poles like jokes. We like them and repeat them. And not only non-Party people, but Party members as well. If, therefore, the court passes a sentence of three years for jokes, then the total amount of punishment for all of us gathered here should be 1,200 years of imprisonment.*

There was tremendous applause for Kisielewski. Only the leading Party literary activists, with tightly closed lips, refused to take part in it. Some of them shouted hostile remarks.

ATTENTION was now concentrated on Jerzy Andrzejewski, who proceeded toward the stand with the microphone.

I am in favour of quiet attitudes and prudence in public life— began Andrzejewski—*unfortunately the situation in Poland in 1968 is such that it is those very two things which compel us to speak about particularly drastic and painful matters.*

In my view and understanding—and I am sure not only in mine— moderate and quiet words can no longer express the great indignation which is aroused in us and which troubles us in the face of the progressive process from year to year of sterilizing and destroying Polish thought and Polish culture. The optimistic

[3] Szpotanski was sentenced in 1967 to three years' imprisonment for writing a satirical skit which was read only in private.

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phrases of which there were so many a year ago at the Cultural Congress, do not hide and cannot hide the sad reality. What the nation thinks and says is not heeded and is held in total contempt. Every idea which deviates from the rigid formulae is stifled at birth. Every bold initiative aimed at probing our contemporary life is destroyed. Every creative work boldly dealing with our wounds and ailments is banned or subjected to destructive treatment. The present is lied about, history—falsified, We are in a situation in which we, the Polish writers, should sound the alarm with all the strength and determination at our disposal, because the very existence of Polish culture and Polish creativity is threatened. Where are we going?

I am not uttering these bitter words in order to aggravate things or—as the popular saying goes—to drive a knife in the back. It is high time that the people ruling Poland understood that voices of criticism, even of the sharpest criticism, protests and demonstrations—especially youth demonstrations—are not dictated by hostility. Their only motive is honest, civic concern: concern for the fate of this country and for the people who live, work and create here.

For many years I have not spoken in public, but today, with the full responsibility which falls on me, I must say that despite the official reports and evaluations—acts contrary to the basic rights of political, social and moral existence are increasing today. It is not easy for me to say this, to make such heavy charges—I think, however, that it is my duty to do this—here and now—for I have no other possibility of speaking in public.

Andrzejewski's speech made a big impression. It was followed by long applause. Some writers came up to him and shook his hand.

JERZY PUTRAMENT was the last to speak. He wanted to raise the spirits of his followers, to destroy his opponents and to draw to his side the undecided. The atmosphere prevailing was not favourable for his speech. The writers knew him too well and saw through his tricks a long time ago.

Comrades—Putrament began in a mentorial tone—*I will tell you that what is beginning to happen here is not good, it is not good at all!*

There were cries from the audience 'For whom?'

For all of us, comrades. Do not think that anyone is excluded, that anyone enjoys some immunity (ironical laughter among the audience).—*Yes, comrades. And I will be the one to suffer most, I will be blamed. . . .*

Ironical cries from the audience interrupted the speaker. The Chairman quietened the audience.

Listen—Putrament continues after a moment—*I do not think that the Party's decision concerning the ban on the performances of 'Dziady' was a fortunate one. I even think that it was not good,*

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but . . . well, listen, it happened, it is so, and now we must make the best of it. The matter must be approached with a sense of responsibility.

Again there were loud cries and jeering laughter from the audience. Putrament shouted down the noise, raising his voice:

Yes, with a sense of responsibility We should not thunder, be cocky or use epithets like those which we have heard here—particularly in Kisielewski's speech (loud turmoil in the hall). *We have heard better speeches from Kisielewski. The speech he made today was not good—and it may turn out not to be good for his health.*

Loud cries: 'No threats, please!' Stormy protests.

I am warning you—Putrament shouts with passion—*Be careful!*

The Chairman called upon the writers to let Putrament speak in peace.

Comrades—Putrament continued—*words were uttered here which will not be well received in the country. They can do us a lot of harm.* (The tumult in the hall increases.) *I would like to mention here, for example, certain allusions contained in Jasienica's speech. You know, in that part . . . where he read that crude, anti-semitic poem.*

Was this necessary? No, I knew that such a poem was circulating at the University. And I know quite well that our security authorities have already started to search energetically for the perpetrators, and that they will find them and punish them severely. Our Party does not tolerate anti-semitism. It does not allow any form of nationalistic hatred. There is no room for racial segregation in our country as in America. We will find the culprits and we will punish them. And quickly at that. (Cries and ironic comments among the audience.)

The name of Nina Karsow[4] *was mentioned here. This is a very unfortunate case. I—you know—feel sorry for her, but just try to think what would have happened before the war had clandestine material been found in anyone's possession!* (Loud noise and numerous cries: 'This was not clandestine material! Shame!')

The Chairman again tried to calm the audience and said that the Warsaw branch and the Presidium of the Polish Writers' Union had received letters concerning the case of Nina Karsow. The Presidium will deal with it. The Chairman asked the audience once more not to interrupt Putrament in his speech.

Comrades—Putrament said—*you have grievances against the leadership, even, let us say, against Comrade Gomulka. Well—*

[4] Nina Karsow, an invalid and the secretary of a blind Jewish writer, Szymon Szechter, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in 1967 for 'activities hostile to the state'. She was found in possession of Szpotanski's skit and similar writings. At the age of two, during the German occupation of Poland, she was thrown out of a train carrying her and her Jewish parents to an extermination camp. She was brought up by a Polish woman who rescued her.

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you know—I will tell you: Comrade Gomulka is—you know—a difficult man . . . Yes, difficult. He is a man with whom it is difficult to talk. He is a man deprived of a sense of humour. But he is also the man on whom our friendship with the Soviet Union depends. (Loud noise among the audience.) *There was such a moment in our history, you know, when everything was in a vacuum . . . And he saved the country.* (Loud protests and cries: 'Not him! The nation! There were others too! October!') Putrament, irritated, hit the table with his fist, quieting the uproar, and went on:

Please listen. We can and we must talk with the leadership! If we moderate our tone somewhat, if out of the two resolutions we make one—then I assure you that it will be possible to talk. (Voices from various parts of the hall: 'We have already tried so many times and in vain!')

I promise you—Putrament said solemnly—*here, on this spot, that within a month—well, even within two weeks—our delegation will be received by the leadership of the Party . . .* (Loud laughter among the audience.) *Listen*—Putrament continued in a pleasant and good-natured voice—*listen, we have so many matters, so important to all of us, like the question of old-age pensions, matters pertaining to living conditions, to reprints, to paper . . .* (Numerous ironic voices among the audience: 'Election bait!')

Putrament lost his temper and began to threaten:

Just as you like, as you make your bed . . . But you might be sorry. For we shall close the road for ourselves and who knows when it will open again! I warn you!

A few official cheers from Party members followed.

THE voting lasted about 45 minutes. The liberal writers were full of optimism and spoke to each other boldly and in a lively way. Among the Party men one could sense some tension and a kind of expectancy.

Suddenly an administrative functionary of the Polish Writers' Union, who had been guarding the entrance doors to the building which were closed, appeared. He moved quickly through the hall and corridors, feverishly looking for somebody. He finally saw him. He approached Putrament, bent and whispered something in his ear. Putrament immediately jumped up, left the cafeteria and hurriedly went out with his coat thrown over his shoulders. Through the temporarily opened doors one could see dark figures.

Not everybody noticed this, but from the expression on the faces of some Party men one could see that something important was happening. Putrament had not yet returned. Meanwhile the Chairman resumed the meeting. She announced the results of the vote. Kijowski's resolution received 245 votes; 124 voted in favour of the Party resolution.

The result was received with long, stormy applause. When the

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applause died down, the Chairman passed on to the last item on the agenda: motions from the floor.

Suddenly a young man ran towards the Chairman and whispered something to her. Zolkiewska went pale, she stood in front of the microphone and said in a dramatic voice:

> *Colleagues. We must stop the debate at once. Provocation is being organized outside. Please go home quietly. Colleagues! I beg you. I call the debate to a halt. The next part of today's agenda is postponed until the ordinary meeting which will be held within a month.*

Amid noise and bewilderment the writers left the building in small groups. It was 2 o'clock in the morning. They saw a number of suspicious-looking individuals hanging around, obviously put there for a purpose.

WRITERS—POLITICS—CULTURE: ABOUT THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF WARSAW WRITERS

Trybuna Ludu

27 March 1968

VERBA volant, scripta manent—the maxim says. Words fly away, letters remain. Appraising thus the extraordinary general meeting of the Warsaw branch of the Polish Writers' Union of 29 February 1968, it could be said that it was of secondary importance. Secondary in comparison with a writer's work which remains on paper permanently and constitutes the most important expression of the attitudes and reflections of writers. But a month has passed since the meeting and yet it is still being referred to in talks, discussions and publications. It is being referred to in the context of political problems.

After all, the initiators wished to endow the writers' views with this character when they were endeavouring to convene an extraordinary meeting in Warsaw. It is worth while recalling that since 1922, that is, 46 years ago, the Warsaw writers have not convened an extraordinary meeting. Neither before the war nor throughout the post-war period have they considered a vital national or international problem as sufficiently important to convene an extraordinary meeting.

In the course of the last month the country has been under the fire of a difficult battle in which appeals for composure and prudence are clashing with calls for irresponsible riots, though the latter are becoming ever more isolated. The meeting of Warsaw writers was one of the first important links in the chain of events whose other links we know already from bitter experience. This gives new perspective and enables us to look in a mature way at the more general subjects which were

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raised during the discussion and the arguments supplied. This leads us to emphasize that it is impossible to belittle the meeting's negative political significance.

COMRADE Wladyslaw Gomulka, on the Party leadership's behalf, gave a summary appraisal of its course and consequences at the meeting with Warsaw activists. Speaking of certain inspirers and organizers of the meeting, the First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee stressed that it was not in the least a question of obtaining an explanation of the suspension of Dejmek's production of *Dziady*, but of 'organizing a demonstration of writers, kindling an atmosphere of excitement and unrest and spreading it outside the writers' milieu. The point was to unleash a campaign against the leadership of our Party, against the government, against the people's authority. They screened their reactionary goals with the misleading slogan of defence of the national culture.'

Pawel Jasienica, Andrzej Kijowski, Seweryn Pollak, Arnold Slucki, Wanda Leopold and the others who initiated the collection of signatures among members of the Polish Writers' Union on the motion to hold an extraordinary meeting, allegedly for discussing the matter of *Dziady*, themselves treated this matter as a pretext. In the very first words of his speech at the general meeting Slonimski stated: 'Supporting the proposal submitted by colleague Kijowski, I would like, by way of supplementing it, to expand my argument, since I consider that the matter of *Dziady* must not be separated from the general context of our life, our cultural affairs.' This theme was taken up by Stefan Kisielewski who said: 'Ladies and gentlemen, it would be ridiculous, naturally, if we were to speak today only of the matter of *Dziady*, without projecting it over a wider background.' 'It is not simply the matter of *Dziady*'—declared Kolakowski—'it is the matter of the conditions of existence of the national culture which is dwarfed under innumerable blows . . .'.

Many attempts at 'expanding the argument' were made at the meeting of the Warsaw branch of the Polish Writers' Union. Public opinion has often heard the names of persons who were prominent in this. 'Is evil immanently connected with the revolutionary building of a new political system, the very principle of communism?'—Slonimski asked rhetorically. He was accompanied by Kisielewski, who resorted extensively to such phrases as 'spiritual vandalism' and 'dictatorship of ignoramuses'. Pawel Jasienica attempted to disguise his real intentions with a perfidious charge of anti-semitism. January Grzedzinski, who openly supports with his pen the foreign sources of imperialist propaganda directed against People's Poland, went so far as to launch attacks, full of hatred, against the Ministry of Culture and Art, declaring that if he had 'full freedom of choice' between Minister Motyka and the Tsar's satrap Novosiltsov, he would choose the latter.

The notorious extraordinary meeting of writers was probably the only tribune in Poland where it was possible to express such slanders with impunity.

Leszek Kolakowski considered that the draft resolution prepared by Kijowski—and we know today that this move was synchronized with

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the campaign of disturbances in Warsaw University—'did not reflect in full measure the protest and bitterness provoked by the present-day administration of Polish culture'.

Kolakowski did not spare the sharpest terms to describe the alleged 'crisis' of Polish culture; he held that 'a huge mass of unavoidable opposition had agglomerated feelings of bitterness, frustrated hopes, of the hopelessness of the situation, proofs of incompetence and lack of ability in the cultural leadership'. He spoke of theatres 'rendered helpless', of the deterioration of Polish films, of the 'devastation of intellectual life'. These unbridled accusations, which disregarded all objective truths, were in fact an attack on all the principal fields of contemporary life in Poland.

This attack was necessary to Kolakowski to enable him to question any interference on the part of the country's political leadership concerned with the choice and distribution of ideological-artistic texts, to question the cultural policy of the state and its influence on the development of national culture, against which he thundered, using the epithet: 'parochial monopoly'.

Let us ask: were it not for that influence and the role the state plays, which has been named a disastrous 'parochial monopoly', what would be the course of development of art and culture and what would be the situation of the artists themselves? How many of them could have developed their talents without help and assistance from the state? Without the help of large state funds, how many theatres would remain open in Poland? How many actors would be left without bread, how many writers with no possibilities to publish would have to undertake the toil of making a living outside of literature, as used at one time to happen to the greatest of our writers, including Reymont, Zeromski, and still remains the rule even in the richest of capitalist countries?

Allegedly 'in the name of socialism', Kolakowski attacked the draft resolution presented at the general meeting by the Party organization. The motive he gave for this was his concern that subsequent press reports will allegedly be limited to a 'great communiqué: Polish writers protest against the anti-state demonstrations'. As if it was their job to connect themselves with such demonstrations.

The short statement by Jerzy Andrzejewski was characteristic of the same lack of responsibility in judging the achievements of People's Poland. According to Andrzejewski 'no sufficiently moderate terms now exist to describe the depth of the opposition which must arise in face of the annually progressive process of sterilization and destruction of Polish thought and culture'. 'The very existence of Polish creativeness and Polish culture is threatened'—such was the dramatic call of the author whose books are published in huge editions. . . . 'In Poland, contrary to official reports and reviews, things are happening that are contrary to the basic rights of social, political and moral life.'. . .

At the meeting, the instigators of the hostile campaign were not particular about their means in order to assure supremacy for themselves. The advocates of 'liberalism' and 'indivisibility of culture' strove with rabid intolerance to drown every voice of calm, wisdom

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and moderation. Empty charges and exaggeration of real shortcomings were to serve to 'substantiate' the thesis about an alleged 'threat to national culture' produced by the cultural policy of People's Poland. The violence of this attack and the fact that it is launched precisely now, in conjunction with the trouble-stirring activities at the University of Warsaw, indicate the source of the choice of a tactic which lies outside the field of culture.

The cultural policy now implemented by our Party and state organs was not formed today or yesterday, but has for years been a guideline for action and achievement in the post-October period. . . .

The Party does interfere with the workshop affairs of creators, does not want to impose on them recipes and requirements as regards the forms and the technique of expression; it also leaves scope for innovations and experiment. Nevertheless, it supports most ardently works representing a high artistic standard, corresponding to the spiritual requirements of the broad masses of readers, viewers and listeners, cultivating their preference, taste, and interest in the direction corresponding to the socialist educational intentions of the party'.

This is the positive platform on which the Party bases its bond with the creative milieu and its cultural practice.

Does it mean that this practice is faultless, that errors and mistakes do not occur? Of course errors occur. Practice can always be discussed and what needs to be mended can be mended. But the inspirers of the Warsaw meetings were not concerned with substantial discussion and business-like criticism of shortcomings. The extraordinary meeting of the ZLP Warsaw branch served exclusively, in accordance with their intentions, political demonstration goals and to drive the wind into the sails of the anti-socialist forces. Anti-Polish propaganda and ideological subversion centres want to plunder after each demonstration of this kind. They look for every opportunity to set the names of writers well known to masses of readers against the people's authority. Up till today these hostile propaganda centres have been going into ecstasies, commenting on the course of the Warsaw writers' meeting. In this respect it was really 'extraordinary', it was an extraordinary windfall for the enemies of People's Poland.

Appreciation should be expressed for the minority, unfortunately, of the writers present at the meeting who summoned up courage to express active protest against the stream of invective and accusations aimed at the policy of People's Poland. We are convinced that the attitude of these writers will meet with the support of all writers who really feel responsible for the fortunes of the culture of People's Poland.

Jan Ruszczyc.

THE POLISH STUDENT RESOLUTION

Adopted by students of Warsaw Polytechnic on 13 March, 1968, it demanded:

1. The observance of the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic and particularly of Article 71, which reads: 'The Polish

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People's Republic guarantees its citizens freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, meetings, parades and demonstrations.'

2. The release and cessation from repression of all students from Warsaw centres of learning, and the publication of a full list of those arrested.

3. The punishment of those guilty of brutality towards students, and their public condemnation.

4. The cessation of attempts to set the working class at odds with the progressive intelligentsia and young students.

5. An explanation in the press, on radio and on television that the information about previous incidents was false, and the subsequent correction of this.

6. The guarantee of the inviolability and security of students in the precincts of academic institutions.

7. The refusal to take steps against academic workers for any support they may have shown the students.

8. The withdrawal from academic areas and student hostels of civilian employees of the Citizens' Militia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

9. We dissociate ourselves decisively from anti-semitism and from zionism.

10. We also call on all Polish students and the whole mass of youth being educated to develop self-control and to prevent provocative action by intruders from outside our circles, intruders who threaten the good name of the Polish student.

11. We demand the continuation in the future of meetings between the academic authorities and the whole student body on subjects which are disturbing the student milieu.

12. We demand publicity for all debates.

13. We demand the propagation of our resolution *in toto* in the press, on radio and on television. At the same time we guarantee to the academic authorities and to society that we desire to educate ourselves and to build socialism in our land of democracy.

STUDENTS AND ZIONISTS

A Voice from Tirana: Broadcast by Kazimierz Mijal,* 28 December 1967

In the concern for the revolutionary purity of their ranks, the Party and all communists face the militant task of uniting in the battle against all kinds of renegades from communism: opportunists, supporters of conciliation, careerists and ordinary agents of the Gomulkaites. In the Polish Communist Party there can be no place for the disguised agents of Trotskyism and zionism. That is why it is necessary to warn workers and young people against the diversionary group of young contemporary revisionists at Warsaw University. Behind the group of young Trotskyites and zionists of Modzelewski and company stands the

* An old Stalinist who escaped to Albania, and now regularly broadcasts from Tirana (cf. *Survey*, April 1967).

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Zambrowski group and its older brothers, the agents of zionism and US imperialism. . . .

A Speech by Gomulka, Trybuna Ludu, 20 March 1968

Our Party and the state authorities exercising supervision over advanced education have displayed considerable—and as the experience has demonstrated, unfortunately much too great—restraint and caution in interfering for political reasons with the life of the academic milieux.

If there is in Poland today any danger to the freedom of research and scientific discussion, it has been created not by the policy of our Party, but by the action of that group of shady politicos, holding academic degrees, who have abused that freedom by propagating hostile, revisionist views, and by sowing confusion in the minds of young people. . . .

In the events which have taken place an active part was played by a number of students of Jewish origin or nationality. The parents of many of these students occupy more or less responsible and also high positions in our state. That is primarily the reason why the oft-misinterpreted call for struggle against zionism has emerged on the wave of these events.

Are there any Jewish nationalists in Poland who follow zionist ideology? Certainly there are. It would be a misunderstanding, however, for anybody to see zionism as a danger to socialism in Poland, or to the existing socio-political system. Such a danger, if ever it were to come about—and that is hardly likely—could only emerge from the various reactionary sources inside the country, assisted from abroad by international centres of anti-communist reaction.

This does not mean, however, that no problem exists in Poland. It is what I would call the problem of self-definition on the part of some Jews—citizens of our country. I shall give examples to demonstrate my meaning.

Last year during Israel's June aggression against the Arab states, a certain number of Jews disclosed, in various ways, their desire to go to Israel to take part in the war against the Arabs. There can be no doubt that Jews with Polish citizenship are not tied to Poland either by reasons of sentiment or intellect, but to the state of Israel. They are most certainly Jewish nationalists. Can one hold this against them? Only in as much as communists are opposed to any nationalists, regardless of their nationality. It is my supposition that this category of Jews will sooner or later come to leave Poland. At one time we had opened our frontiers wide to all those who did not wish to remain citizens of our country and wanted to go to Israel. We are also ready today to issue emigration passports to all who consider Israel as their fatherland. . . .

Moczar's Follower Hints at Coup d'État: Kazimierz Kakol, Prawo i Zycie, 24 March 1968

We have known for a long time that, recognizing as advantageous to themselves the certain degree of disintegration in the international workers' movement, plans for a 'political earthquake in 1968' were

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worked out, and that, as regards certain persons in our Party leadership, a campaign of 'personal crumbling away' was planned. And not only planned; for some time now, subversive efforts have been intensified to slander the individual members of the leadership of our Party, concentrating these attacks in a way noticeable to everyone. . . .

The time has come for a scrupulous and uncompromising analysis. The whole matter cannot be reduced to several names which have been mentioned and which mean nothing to many people. Public opinion and above all the Party organizations have the right to know who has been paralysing the processes of positive changes in many fields of our life and in what way; who has been backing incompetent, discredited people carrying on intrigues at their places of work. . . .

Like Der Stürmer: Oscar Davico, Komunist, Belgrade, 28 March 1968

Certain circles in Poland . . . should not, as communists, justify their own weaknesses by putting the blame on the sons of some former leaders whose Polonized names must never be a reason for a [nazi] *Stürmer*-type investigation of their Jewish origin. An official news agency item has not failed to mention, in parentheses, the *real Jewish* surnames of the grandfathers of the arrested students who dared to protest against the banning of Mickiewicz's *Dziady*. . . .

This is the reason why I am revolted by the blindness of certain Polish circles which, instead of trying to find beneath the demonstrations that progressive essence which the Warsaw demonstrations must also have, and partially really do have, instead of realizing as communists the essence of these phenomena as a trend toward the putting into practice of all freedoms—which is actually the real and only nature of socialism—yielding to who knows what type of reflections, they do not shrink from proclaiming a few Jews as solely guilty of everything unpleasant that has happened. . . .

The Genesis of the Conflict, Andrzej Werblan, Miesiecznik Literacki, June 1968

Internal cosmopolitan tendencies have provided a basis for the false accusation of anti-semitism against those comrades who understood that no society can tolerate the excessive participation of a national minority in the *élite* of power, particularly in defence, security, propaganda, and diplomacy.

Gomulka to the Twelfth Plenum, Trybuna Ludu, 13 July 1968

We should completely unmask revisionism and not cover it up by the concept of zionism . . . Zionism is a part of the anti-communist front. Zionists, through their slanderous campaign, want to create a certain atmosphere in our society, to equate a zionist and a Jew. On the one hand, it facilitates anti-communist attacks, on the other—it is supposed to increase the number of emigrants to Israel, even among non-zionists. It is simply a question of cannon-fodder and colonization of the conquered Arab territories . . . As they have no candidates from the zionist circles in the West they have launched a slanderous attack on Poland.

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THE MOSCOW CORRESPONDENT —A SYMPOSIUM

FOR HALF A CENTURY our knowledge of what happens at any given time in the Soviet Union has derived largely from the dispatches sent from Moscow by press agencies and foreign correspondents. They play a major part in providing a picture of the changing Soviet scene and in creating its image abroad. But their work is hampered by restrictions and pressures designed to limit their opportunities for gathering information and to prevent its uninhibited transmission. How have the conditions of their work affected the content of their messages at various periods? What did they really know about what was going on at different times? How much of this did not reach their readers? And how much distorted information was conveyed by some correspondents submitting, for various reasons, to the pressure of the authorities? There is little doubt that for the Moscow correspondent, in the circumstances in which he finds himself, the medium is either the (official) massage or a (personal) crypto-message.

The story of the Moscow correspondents is an unknown chapter of contemporary history. It can illuminate not only the changing conditions of their work, but also the Soviet scene at the time. It gives some idea of how much wider in the Soviet Union than in the West is the gap between contemporary and historical knowledge. It also makes possible a comparison with the present conditions of work of a Peking correspondent. In *The Peking Papers* (Arthur Barker, London, 1968) Jacques Marcuse describes them vividly:

> With personal interviews practically out of the question, press conferences non-existent, speechless official 'spokesmen', and human contacts with the population strictly banned, the foreign correspondent in Peking has three main sources of information: the official handouts, the English service of the official NCNA, and the official daily press. One's work, almost entirely paper-work, consists essentially in interpreting written documents. . . .
>
> The editorials of the Communist Party organ, the *People's Daily*, are of course to be treated as gospel and analysed as such. One manages to work out a new angle occasionally by comparing the day's lead with another paper published on the same subject several weeks or months ago. The two are usually almost identical, but a change of word here, a different turn of phrase there, may provide the ghost of a hint. From such tiny variations on well-worn themes one sometimes draws conclusions that are not necessarily well founded, and occasionally thinks one has discovered intentions that are not there at all. Still, it makes copy. But it is exegesis rather than journalism. . . .
>
> The more frustrated we became as journalists, the more we had to laugh. Newsworthy developments, in so far as they were revealed to the foreign press or could be guessed at, we dealt

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with to the best of our ability in our daily dispatches. We tried to make sense of and to boil down to readable stories the verbiage of the *People's Daily* and the *Red Flag* fortnightly. But personally, what we saw in it was no more than the repetitive clumsiness of clumsy indoctrination set down in clumsy language. The major campaigns which the Party machinery launched periodically on a variety of subjects were so unconvincing as to border on the farcical. The perpetual boasts of the regime, its over-Victorian prudishness, the palpable untruths which the people (and ourselves) were expected to swallow without demur, the childish propaganda, the purposeful isolation and ignorance in which we were kept, in fact everything that we most disliked and held in contempt made us roar with permanent mirth. At the same time, it all became unreal. The whole picture. It was like watching a film version of Orwell's *1984*, starring the Marx Brothers.

How far has the Soviet Marxian model got away from its worthy imitator? This can be judged from the observations, descriptions, and reflections given in the present symposium by press correspondents working in Moscow at various periods, from Lenin's time to Brezhnev's.

It gives a composite picture of some of the difficulties and pressures with which they still have to contend. If they overstep the arbitrary line of what is permitted—which they have to guess—they are reprimanded (or even expelled). For instance, Vero Roberti of the *Corriere della Sera*, who in the late 50s made various attempts to beat the censor, received at the time the following, not untypical, warning from the spokesman of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Mr Zamyatin:

> The press department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR has examined some of your articles recently published in *Corriere della Sera.* Our attention was drawn to their tendentious and anti-Soviet character.
>
> Objectivity has never been a particular characteristic of your articles and you remember of course that the press department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR has already warned you about this. Your articles describe Soviet reality in a hostile and malicious manner and therefore slander the Soviet people and its leaders. Your activity as a correspondent in the USSR not only does not contribute to the development and the strengthening of Soviet-Italian relations, but is actually harmful to those relations and is misleading the Italian reader about the real situation in the USSR. Your articles insult the Soviet people and denigrate its achievements.
>
> It is clear that in publishing your articles the editors of *Corriere della Sera* give the impression of deliberately wanting to harm Soviet-Italian relations and therefore the press department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gives you another warning. Any other distortion of Soviet reality on your part, any new defamatory attack on the Soviet people and its leaders, will make it necessary for us to apply such measures as will prevent the Moscow office of your journal from continuing in future to be a centre of anti-Soviet information.

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> We ask you therefore to draw the attention of your editors to this note and to take appropriate steps in this respect.

More recently, on 18 January 1968, the same Mr Zamyatin issued the following warning to the foreign correspondents (among 150 of them, more than 100 are non-communists):

> It has come to our attention that you intend to go today to a private apartment in connexion with the trial of Ginzburg and others.
>
> In this connexion, I wish to remind you that, in accordance with regulations, any contacts of foreign correspondents with offices and private persons must be arranged through the press department of the Foreign Ministry.
>
> I want to warn you that any violation of the established rule will result in our taking severe measures against the violators.

The warning was heeded by all, except four (American) correspondents, who tried to defy the ban, but found their way barred by the plain-clothes men from the security police. The representatives of the leading world news agencies were instructed by their head offices not to attend. Reuter explained that it is its policy 'never knowingly to place a correspondent at risk', and that its 'first duty is to operate a network of permanent correspondents throughout the world in order to give the best possible news service' to its subscribers. In order to be able to do so it 'must therefore respect the laws and regulations of the countries in which it works'.

The general public abroad is not well informed about the background of such painful decisions. Five weeks later the Soviet Foreign Ministry gave a 'final serious warning' to Reuter's chief correspondent in Moscow, Mr Adam Kellet-Long (who was previously the head of its Peking bureau*), against publishing stories based on contacts with private Soviet citizens. Although Mr Kellet-Long emphatically denied that any news information was gathered in this way since an earlier warning in January, the spokesman of the Ministry solemnly reiterated that 'Information based on unauthorized contact with Soviet citizens, either direct or indirect, is barred'.

The comments on this new application of the old law ranged from the cautious to the outspoken, but there is little doubt about the feelings of the journalistic world about it.

Kyril Tidmarsh in *The Times* (20 January 1968) in a carefully worded dispatch from Moscow said:

> During the past few years, and particularly since 1961 when censorship of outgoing dispatches was lifted, this kind of censorship

* The present Reuter's man in Peking, Mr Anthony Grey, has been under house arrest since July 1967. The senior Agence France Presse correspondent in Peking, M. Jean Vincent, was expelled from China in May 1968, after a previous warning that certain of his dispatches were 'slanderous and untrue'. This reduced the number of foreign correspondents in China to 13, five of them being from communist countries.

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> at source has been considerably relaxed. Now it remains to be seen how exactly the existing regulations will be applied.

Raymond H. Anderson, another Moscow correspondent, wrote in the *International Herald Tribune* (30 January 1968):

> If the prohibition were to be applied indiscriminately, foreign newsmen would find themselves working under conditions equal to those of the worst years of Stalin, totally isolated from ordinary Soviet citizens.

The *Daily Telegraph* (20 January 1968) commented:

> To get some impression of the restrictions imposed on foreign correspondents in Russia, a citizen in this country would have to imagine that no overseas correspondent could interview him without the permission of Scotland Yard. A law to such effect prevails in the Soviet Union today. It was passed in the old, repressive days of Stalin and is utilized in the new, repressive days of Brezhnev and Kosygin.

The Economist (27 January 1968) made an equally caustic comment:

> This inevitably makes people ask whether it is worth while for foreign newspapers to shoulder all the expense of keeping a correspondent in Russia. Many Western papers, not only news agencies, now have their permanent correspondents in Moscow, because it is assumed that correspondents are now more or less free to write stories on the spot in their own way and with the addition of local colour. If they were reduced, once again, to copying handouts and seeing only whom Mr Zamyatin thinks fit, they would become a luxury that could be dispensed with.

Unfortunately, it is improbable that this will cause Mr Zamyatin to shed many tears. It would be different if all the correspondents acted in unison, but this in the competitive world of journalism is more than unlikely, as recent events have shown only too clearly.

What, however, should not be beyond the realm of possibility is to draw a much clearer line between those correspondents (some of them communists) who have been manfully struggling against great odds to fulfil their duty of personally securing and providing information about the Soviet scene, and those others who make it difficult for the reader to realize that what he sees is not very different from an official handout.

In one of his more recent dispatches, Kyril Tidmarsh, *The Times* man in Moscow, thus described the latest Soviet effort to 'set up an iron curtain round the foreign press' (1 May 1968):

> One day last week a team of workers arrived at the building where the Moscow office of *The Times* is located and began to construct a 9ft.-high wire fence around it. The steel barrier now enclosing this building, which houses diplomats and foreign correspondents, was driven across a road and a children's playground and the only access into the newly created compound is through a single entry guarded day and night by two policemen. The explanation given for erecting this fortification is that it is necessary to protect the tenants

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> and their cars . . . but I suspect the basic reason for construction of the expensive fence has more to do with politics. While most embassies and diplomatic quarters here were built within secure compounds during earlier periods of east-west tension, this newest building for foreigners was completed three years ago at a time when contacts with the outside world were multiplying.
>
> Now that there is a general tightening-up of vigilance, someone somewhere has decided that it is wrong to have little Russian boys from across the road playing football in the foreigners' car park while their elders occasionally chat to their foreign neighbours. For the small groups of Russians, now curiously watching the wire mesh panels being lifted into position, this barrier dividing them from the Africans, Asians, and westerners across the street is a concrete symbol of the fact that the larger iron curtain dividing them from the outside world has not been lifted.

While it is true that the systematic efforts for half a century to prevent the public abroad from receiving reliable information about the Soviet Union have not been eminently successful, and in some respects they may have even been counter-productive, it is also true that in other respects they have been fulfilling their purpose. They contributed to the ignorance and confusion about Soviet matters of current interest and towards conditioning at least part of the public about them in a particular way.

In an age of mass communication, when 'the headline' and 'the image' seem often more important than the content of the message in their impact on public opinion, it is the countries with a free press and television which suffer a certain disadvantage vis-à-vis the countries where media of information are completely controlled, because the latter can create a distorted picture not only in their own countries but also for the mass audience abroad through the network of controls in which the foreign correspondent has to work. In the long run truth will out, but how long is the long run? If the time-lag is now shorter than it used to be, it is less the result of a significant increase in official permissiveness than in the continuous effort to overcome the official controls by the much-tried Moscow correspondent.

BEFORE AND DURING THE REVOLUTION

M. Philips Price

WHEN I WENT TO RUSSIA as the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent in November 1914, the Tsar's government had an organization for assisting foreign correspondents. Part of it was connected with the censorship. Before one could send a press telegram one had to submit it to the censor. The War Ministry was concerned with military news,

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while the Ministry of the Interior looked after information about the internal affairs of Russia. I found that they were not unduly hampering. In fact, during 1916, when the economic condition of Russia was becoming increasingly serious as a result of the war, one could often send dispatches and articles and get them published, although one would have thought they would have been stopped. For instance, I remember writing an article in which I reported very openly about the decline of Russia's economic strength and of the unlikelihood that the Russian army would remain for much longer an effective fighting force. It got through the censor largely because of the division inside the Tsar's government. The reactionaries wanted peace with Germany because they feared revolution. Consequently they were not against painting the internal state of Russia as black. The moderately liberal elements in the government wanted war to the bitter end with annexations in the Middle East. They wanted the internal conditions of Russia to be described as not too bad but needing help from the West. As neither element could agree, my article went through and was published, but was blacked out when copies of the *Manchester Guardian* reached Russia.

I was in the Caucasus when the March revolution came. There was a military censor there too, who had control of information about the war. With the Tsar's abdication, he faded out. Otherwise there was no press bureau or official information centre of any kind.

When I interviewed the Grand Duke Nicholas the day after his nephew's abdication, his secretary, Prince Orlov, sent a note to my flat and asked me to come and receive a statement. It seemed that he was in charge of all information connected directly with the Viceroy. From then on there was no organization in Russia on whom a foreign journalist could rely for contact for official information. The various provisional governments were weak and ineffective.

When I got to Petrograd I used to go to the Prime Minister's (Kerensky's) office and sometimes got information. Then I would go to the headquarters of the Petrograd Soviet. The Mensheviks there were moderately communicative but the Bolsheviks were difficult to contact and very often in hiding. One went about with one's eyes open and reported what one saw. I went down to Kronstadt by boat and contacted the Naval Soviet of the Baltic Fleet. I was taken around and attended a meeting of the Sailors' Soviet on one ship. I also was allowed to visit the commanders, most of whom had been locked up! I went down to Helsingfors (Helsinki) and the same thing happened there, but I also fell in with a demonstration of sailors before the graves of their former comrades who had been shot for mutiny during the abortive revolution in 1905. In this way one got information by just going about and meeting with chance events.

The most exciting time I had was in August and September 1917, when I decided I would make a journey on my own down the Volga to the Cossack steppes. No one had been there since the fall of the Tsar

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and not many before then. My European colleagues in Petrograd thought that I was mad and that for certain I would get my throat cut. In fact, I had the time of my life. Wherever I went, I walked into the office of the Social-Revolutionary Party, that curious collection of intellectuals who claimed to have the ear of the peasants. In fact they had, but their influence was fading as the army at the front began to disperse and the peasants went home with their rifles and began to take over the landlords' estates. I got all the information I wanted and more by just going about and noting what I saw, as chaos spread throughout the country. Everyone was nice to me and pleased that I had come to see what was happening.

SOON AFTER I RETURNED to Petrograd, the Bolsheviks seized power. At first again there was chaos, but by knowing a few people I arranged to be taken to attend the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet and a little later of the All-Russia Conference of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Soviets. At first the Petrograd Soviet was the centre of the Revolution and the seat of what authority there was in those days. Later the authority passed to the Conference. I do not remember any actual information centre in any of the commissariats set up by the Bolsheviks. One had to persuade the party functionaries that you were objective and friendly, though not actually a Marxist. That was not too easy at first, but after a while news got through to them from Britain that my dispatches to the *Manchester Guardian* were objective. Then people became increasingly ready to talk and explain things to me. The Russians are a communicative and friendly people by nature and that comes out once the hard crust of officialdom has been broken down. I found it the same under the Bolshevik regime as I had found it under the Tsar's bureaucracy. Thus I remember, at one Party bureau I went to, telling them that they ought to issue some short biographies of the Bolshevik leaders. I told them that no one in the West knew who they were. The thought had never occurred to them and after a while I got some short biographies which were published in the *Manchester Guardian.*

From what I remember, I think this state of affairs continued throughout the winter of 1917–18 and later, too, throughout the spring, summer and autumn of 1918. During the terror in July 1918, it was very difficult to get any information except what one could get by chance. But after the battle of Kazan and the defeat of the Czechoslovak detachments on the Volga, it was easy to contact the Bolsheviks again. As an example of the sort of thing I had to do, I can remember on the eve of the British and French military intervention in Archangel receiving a telegram from C. P. Scott asking me to find out what sort of economic assistance we could give the Soviet government. There was no press bureau anywhere at that time, so I went straight to the Foreign Commissariat and asked to see M. Chicherin, whom I knew. An interview was arranged and I got a statement from him which I telegraphed to Manchester.

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Then came the collapse of Germany and the Armistice with the West, soon after which I left Russia. By that time the Foreign Commissariat was acquiring a skeleton of an information bureau, which I was beginning to find useful. But I also went to the editorial offices of *Izvestia* and, to a rather lesser extent, of *Pravda.* In this informal way I seem to remember that I got the information that enabled me to send telegraphic dispatches and articles to my paper. Mainly, however, I relied on getting about and reporting what I saw.

UNDER LENIN AND STALIN

William Henry Chamberlin

I WENT TO MOSCOW with my Russian-born wife in the summer of 1922 as a freelance journalist, with a commission to send occasional articles tc the *Christian Science Monitor* and still vaguer orders from some radical left-wing publications, which corresponded with my own state of mind about the Soviet Union before I had the corrective experience of living there for twelve years. Later, as there was a dearth of British newspapermen in Moscow at that time, I took on the functions of correspondent for *The Observer*, the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Economist.*

I left Moscow in the spring of 1934 and have never returned. During most of the period of my stay Moscow was not a very 'hot' news centre. The country lived through markedly different social and economic phases: the New Economic Policy and the first Five-Year Plan. There was vast drama, some comedy and, in the end, the stark tragedy of famine (in 1932–33) and the growth of a slave-labour concentration camp system for millions of recalcitrant peasants and others who incurred the displeasure of the authorities. But it was far from easy to explain what was going on to American readers, who were profoundly ignorant of the Soviet system, which was, in some ways, something new under the sun.

Moreover the task of the correspondent was made difficult by the atmosphere of secrecy which had always characterized Russian officialdom, and which had become intensified under the communist dictatorship. All news cables had to be submitted to the censor before being transmitted abroad. The type of item which, true or not, was certain to cause the application of the censor's blue pencil was any information about differences in the Communist Party leadership, any unpublished activity of the political police, which has always existed under many differing names and initials, and all but the most innocuous references to Soviet foreign and military policy.

There was no requirement to submit mail articles for censorship. But letters were habitually opened (usually accompanied by an unconsciously

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amusing stamped statement that the letter had arrived 'with signs of having been opened abroad'). And, if a mailed article obnoxious to Soviet censorship did get through and appeared in print, the consequences would be unpleasant for the correspondent, at best a reprimand and perhaps a denial of some facility by the press department; in more extreme cases, expulsion from the country.

The physical elimination of offending passages in cable dispatches was not the most important item in the wall which the Soviet censorship sought to build between foreign newspaper readers and the realities of Soviet life. Measured in word percentage, the proportion of such eliminations was probably quite small, if only because the experienced correspondent knew by instinct what would and what would not be allowed to pass and saw no gain in a fruitless wrangle with the censor.

Far more significant was the systematic stifling or crippling of sources of independent information. Every printed word in the Soviet Union had to be filtered through the universal censorship of an institution known as *Glavlit*, which is still going strong. Russians who professed willingness to provide information were often police agents or *agents provocateurs*. Those who acted in good faith often ended in concentration camps, especially as political terror intensified under Stalin. There were, of course, foreign embassies; but one often had the feeling that diplomats and journalists were merely telling each other the same old rumours and stories.

Interviews with Soviet officials, when obtained, were seldom revealing; and these became increasingly difficult to obtain as internal Party friction grew and contact with a 'bourgeois' journalist became more compromising, even for a highly placed communist. The correspondent became increasingly dependent on the Soviet press, which was rarely permitted any indiscretions of fact or interpretation. The systematic opening of letters and clumsy tapping of telephones added to a sense of imprisoned isolation. Small wonder that a long unbroken stint of duty in Moscow was, in various ways, a trial for the nerves, and that the expression 'going out to Europe' came more and more into fashion.

IN JOURNALISM, AS IN TRADE, the United States and Germany led the field during my period of service in Moscow. At any given time there were probably half a dozen American and half a dozen German correspondents regularly stationed in the Soviet capital with a scattering from other European and Asian countries.

Probably the best known of these correspondents, although his writings are little remembered now, was Walter Duranty, an Englishman who first came to Moscow in 1921 as correspondent for the *New York Times*. Previously Duranty had established a reputation for sending wildly exaggerated or quite imaginary stories from Riga and other points on the fringe of the Soviet Union.

There was some suspicion that the Soviet authorities struck a

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special deal with Duranty when they consented to let him use the Moscow dateline. However this may be, his bias changed from unfavourable to favourable; and this was especially marked when conditions in the Soviet Union changed sharply for the worse, between 1929 and 1933. Duranty hit upon a soothing rationalization of forced labour, arbitrary arrests and executions, starvation and other unpleasant facts of Soviet life in the first Five-Year Plan. He must have repeated scores of times in his dispatches the aphorism: 'You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.' The Soviet authorities must have been well content to find such a benevolent attitude in the representative of probably the most widely respected United States daily.

Best known of the German correspondents was Paul Scheffer, of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, who distinguished himself by keeping, through some private source, abreast of the developing story of Trotsky's arrest and deportation at the end of 1927. He was finally refused permission to remain in the Soviet Union. It was sadly significant that, while most of the German correspondents rated highly as regards knowledge of Russia, past and present, the most conspicuous exception to this rule, a blatant ignoramus, was the one vociferous Nazi sympathizer.

An American newspaperman of the old-fashioned, hard-boiled, no-nonsense type was Junius Boyd Wood, of the *Chicago Daily News*. Wood spoke no word of any foreign language, remarking belligerently: 'They can talk American to me.' Despite his linguistic deficiencies, he was a shrewd, tenacious reporter, with a wry sense of humour, who positively enjoyed writing stories the censor would turn down. As an example, when the Soviet authorities introduced the rule that meals in certain hotels and restaurants must be paid for in non-Soviet currency, Wood started a dispatch: 'The Soviet government today repudiated its own currency.' Naturally this did not pass the censorship; but the story got around by Moscow's grapevine communication. So did another of the combative and irascible Wood's escapades.

It was the practice in the Moscow post office to readdress in Russian, in green ink, foreign letters. On one occasion Wood received an envelope that showed signs of having been tampered with. Opening it, he found on the letter a tell-tale spot of green ink. He promptly drew a circle around the blot, added the advice 'Fire that man', and sent the envelope to the headquarters of the political police.

Great Britain, in my time, was represented by two correspondents who were eminently not run-of-the-mill. A. T. Cholerton represented the *London Daily News* for many years and Malcolm Muggeridge, for a much shorter time, in 1932–33, sent correspondence to the *Manchester Guardian*.

Cholerton, a large, bearded figure who looked like a pillar of Bloomsbury or Greenwich Village, was one of the wittiest men I have ever known anywhere. How much of his wit survived the censor's blue, or red, pencil I have no means of knowing, as the *London Daily News* was not part of my reading diet. But among many superb epigrams I recall

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the following: 'There doesn't seem to be anything that one could call *habeas corpus* in this country. But they have a good substitute: *habeas cadaver*.'

His brushes with the censors were legendary. In 1928 the Soviet government responded with military force to an attempt by the Chinese Nationalist government to take over the Chinese Eastern Railway, in Manchuria, in which the Soviet government maintained the controlling interest established under the Tsars. One of Cholerton's dispatches, in the censor's opinion, had not sufficiently stressed the point that the Soviet troops were 'counter-attacking', to which the bearded journalist retorted: 'Oh, when you take Washington, you will still be "counter-attacking".'

Muggeridge arrived in Moscow in 1932, an ardent sympathizer with communism who professed to be quite disgusted with his newspaper's lukewarm, petty-bourgeois attitude on the subject. His views underwent such a profound change during approximately six months of his stay that when he left the *Manchester Guardian* hesitated to print him (there had also been a personality clash with some of the directors of the newspaper) and Muggeridge was obliged to seek an outlet in the now long defunct *Morning Post*. He left an enduring memorial of his reaction in his book, *Winter in Moscow*, which, for the few who could identify the characters, is one of the most scathing satires in modern English, directed against some Soviet officials and a number of foreigners whom Muggeridge regarded as too favourable in their judgments and attitudes.

For example, an American woman, notorious as a hot-gospeller for the communist cause, was presented under a transparent pseudonym as 'an enormous woman, apple-cheeked . . . in her eyes a passionate stupidity, a monumental idiocy'. And there is more than a hint of Walter Duranty in 'Jefferson', a journalist who always had a whisky and soda at his elbow as he dictated cables beginning: 'The Kremlin knows there are hardships and inconveniences. It also knows one cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs.'

IN TWO WAYS MY POSITION was more favourable than that of the majority of my colleagues, who were dependent on Soviet secretaries and interpreters. The fact that these were obliged to report regularly to the police on the sayings, contacts and doings of their employers was taken for granted.

My own knowledge of the Russian language unfortunately did not advance beyond facility in reading and ability to speak a stilted and unnatural Russian. My wife, however, possessed an unusual and very advantageous combination: fluent mastery of her native language, Russian, and a United States passport, which saved her from the pressures that would have been put on a Soviet citizen.

I recall a vivid object lesson in this connexion when we were visiting a new tractor plant at Cheliabinsk, in the Urals. While I conversed in my formal and somewhat halting Russian with members of the managerial staff, my wife circulated among the workers and soon found

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that many were there not of their free will. One former worker in another plant said he had broken by accident an unfamiliar machine and had been sent to Cheliabinsk for a term of forced labour. Another, a peasant, had been judged a counter-revolutionary; he remarked, when he cried out at a collective farm meeting, that there was not enough to eat. At this point one of the local communist straw bosses felt that my wife was learning details unfit for a foreign correspondent to learn. Coming up with a rather menacing air and using the somewhat harsh-sounding word *grazhdanka* (citizeness) he inquired whether she was of Soviet nationality. When my wife smilingly replied that she was an American he beat a retreat. But it is easy to imagine how much a foreign journalist with a Soviet interpreter would have learned about forced labour in Cheliabinsk.

My other advantage was that the requirements of my newspapers did not tie me to Moscow. They did not attach a high value to spot cable news which was available through the news agencies, and encouraged me to travel for extended periods. In my time, with the conspicuous and significant exception of the famine period in 1932–33, travel for the foreign journalist was freer, less supervized and chaperoned than it is today. Barring military zones, concentration camps and some other forbidden areas, you could buy railway tickets and go where you chose.

On these trips you were on your own as regards transportation, food and hotels; and the going at times was pretty rough, not to be recommended to anyone who was not fairly rugged and able to put up with a good deal of hardship, frustration and inconvenience. But we survived all these adventures and learned infinitely more about the conditions of everyday Soviet life, especially the chronic overcrowding, than we could hope to learn on the official junkets, organized by the authorities, where everything went smoothly and even a forgotten toothbrush was quickly replaced at a local station by one of the accompanying guides.

What was important for knowledge of contemporary conditions was the chance on these trips to talk directly with the peasants. The villages were never so cowed as the capital. There were fewer communists, fewer police agents in and out of uniform; and the peasants, old and young, welcomed what was usually the unique occasion of meeting Americans.

I recall most vividly a visit to a Ukrainian village where we stayed several days in the whitewashed hut kept by two single peasant women, simple but scrupulously clean. On our first evening there was a revolutionary anniversary performance in the village school, with a declamation glorifying Lenin and the singing of the Internationale. Had we left the village immediately we would have set down the local teacher as a zealous communist.

But as he became better acquainted with us and found we were foreigners and not communists, he opened up more and more and finally (our visit was in 1923, when memories of the fierce and confused civil war in the Ukraine were quite fresh) revealed his

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sympathies completely when he said the village had been a hotbed of guerrilla activity, directed by Ukrainian nationalists, opposed both to the Whites, with their Russian chauvinism and return of the big landlords, and to the communists, with their centralized power, grain requisitions and anti-religious attitude. He ended: 'The communists said we were bandits. But I think we were like Garibaldi.'

Once, in a Ukrainian village not far from the Polish frontier, we remarked, in a talk with peasants who were complaining bitterly that they could not build up prosperous farms under communist policies, that at least they could use the Ukrainian language, which was discriminated against in Poland. A spokesman for the peasants retorted: 'You can't eat language. Remember that in Poland a peasant can *buy land*.' I have seldom heard a human aspiration in a tone of such heartfelt yearning and envy for those fortunate peasants who could 'buy land'.

In retrospect I consider these independent travels in country districts the most informative experience of my journalistic work in the Soviet Union. Freedom of travel was cancelled in the autumn of 1932 for the duration of the 1932–33 famine. It was possible to travel again in the autumn of 1933, when the worst ravages of famine had disappeared with the better harvest of 1933. This right does not exist for foreign newspapermen in the Soviet Union today.

These unchaperoned trips revealed sometimes elements of popular strength for the regime, along with discontent that never found its way into the Soviet newspapers. I recall how, on a bus in some remote corner of Soviet Armenia, a young mountaineer reacted vigorously to criticism of the government by another passenger. 'I came from an illiterate family in a neglected part of the Caucasus', he said in substance. 'The Soviet government gave me an education and a chance to live like a human being. I will die for the Soviet power if I am ever called on to do so.' This was spontaneous and unrehearsed. And anyone who lived in Russia for a long time would have been likely, as I was, to notice how often young people of the poorer classes, sons and daughters of manual workers, children's nurses and domestic servants, were being trained as doctors, engineers and scientists.

Looking back on my twelve years as a correspondent in the Soviet Union, it is clear to me that Soviet pressures on foreign journalists, of which direct excision of cable material was not necessarily the most important, made it impossible for even the most industrious, ingenious and well informed journalist to present a full and undiluted picture of Soviet reality. For proof one need only compare a file of Moscow correspondence with what is now known about the purge trials, the wholesale terror of the political police under Yagoda and Ezhov, the vast network of slave labour concentration camps and the famine of 1932–33. Some of these developments are hinted at, but not described explicitly enough to make the situation clear to the unsophisticated foreign reader. The foreign journalists, with occasional exceptions, did

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their best to convey a truthful and accurate picture. But the odds against them, not the least of which was the cutting off, under the Soviet system, of unhibited news sources, were very heavy.

One could survey the whole press of the Soviet Union during the late twenties and thirties without finding a single confirmatory account of the 1932–33 famine, one realistic story of life in a concentration camp, or a first-hand description of what the official phrase, 'liquidation of the kulaks as a class', meant to millions of human beings. Foreign journalists, of course, were not under the rigorous discipline of the communist-controlled press. But what they could learn was only a small part of the truth and what they could communicate was only a fraction of what they knew. A full picture of the less pleasant sides of Soviet reality can be obtained only by supplementing news reports with books written by foreign observers outside the shadow of censorship, and by the narratives of concentration camp survivors and deportees who later found themselves in a position to tell their stories.

A JOURNALIST IN UTOPIA

Eugene Lyons

MY SIX YEARS IN SOVIET Russia as United Press correspondent, 1928 to 1934, coincided with Stalin's assumption of absolute personal power and were crowded with momentous events. Interest was focused on Russia as never before—the Moscow dateline held an important place in the world press.

Yet the colony of foreign correspondents, to cover one-sixth of the world's surface, was surprisingly small. The largest national contingent, the American, rarely counted more than a dozen reporters, including freelancers. My own 'bureau', which also served the British United Press and newspapers in some 30 other countries, consisted of myself and an interpreter-secretary.

One reason for this paucity of press personnel was the severity of the censorship. News sources were so rigidly restricted—being limited in effect to the Soviet press and official handouts—that there was neither the need nor opportunity for initiative in news-gathering. The do-and-dare correspondent of journalistic legend, digging for scoops and exclusive interviews, had little enough scope for his talents. When an eager-beaver reporter did appear on the Moscow scene, he was marked for frustration. Soon enough he learned that there was no point (other than curiosity) in hunting down stories that could not be sent out anyhow. He learned, moreover, that such enterprise, aside from antagonizing officialdom, exposed his real or suspected sources to police reprisals.

To protect your Soviet acquaintances, you sometimes suppressed exclusive information, even if obtained from foreign diplomats or other non-Soviet sources. The kind of 'contacts' and 'leaks' so vital to

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reporters in free countries was ruled out. Top officials were virtually inaccessible and rarely told you more than was in the press in any case.

Dependent on the same official sources and hemmed in by censorship, we had meagre margins for competitive journalism. It was chiefly skill in recognizing a significant item and deftness in conveying its significance to a distant audience, rather than ability in uncovering news, that distinguished the superior reporter from less inspired colleagues.

Though life in the USSR became more repressive with every passing year, the mechanics of censorship remained unchanged. By 1928 it was already so total that there was scant room for further tightening. For the working journalist, as for foreigners in general, the deepening terror was reflected in growing isolation from the local population. Of the scores of Soviet friends my wife and I made in our first years, only a handful still dared to meet us in the last years—and most of these, we knew, had police permission or even instructions to maintain the infidel relationship.

It was as a physical nuisance, even more than an operational handicap, that the reporters resented the censorship. We thought with envy of cities where you wrote a dispatch, pressed a button, and the job was done.

In Moscow every message had first to be carried to the press department of the Foreign Office. There you waited until one of the four or five censors was ready to check the dispatch. Its precise wording having been bargained over, passages deleted and compromise formulas worked out for telling the news while blurring its meaning, it was signed and rubber-stamped. Then it had to be taken to the one window in the one telegraph office authorized to accept it.

When it was necessary to file a story in hours when the censors were off duty, you trailed one or another of them to their homes, sometimes rousing them out of bed. It was not their fault, given the housing situation, that mostly they lived in distant parts of the city; and at their end, the functionaries can be forgiven for being less than hospitable.

Censorship, in our daily work, came down to dealing with censors. In time you developed a fellow-feeling for their plight. To a larger degree than the correspondents, they were victims of the same system. A censor whose attention or judgment faltered, so that he let through a 'harmful' word or idea, might end up badly. Their area of personal and rational decision was limited, and they collaborated with us in finding a safe way to phrase a piece of news, safe for both partners in the transaction.

The basic rule was that information published in the Soviet press could be passed without question. But there were areas of a reporter's personal impressions or interpretations, nuances in the wording, that spelled danger for the poor censor. It was no secret to him, for instance, that we sometimes injected material we knew could never pass, to divert attention from the things we wanted to transmit. Often a dispatch was held up for hours, even days, while the press department checked with higher authority.

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True, we could send stories by mail without benefit of a censor's rubber stamp. Like other press agency men under orders to hold down cable tolls, I did a good deal of reporting by post. But we knew that our mail was being opened and that, when the story was published, we would be held accountable. It came down to self-censorship and that, in a totalitarian capital, is no more satisfactory than the conventional process. We took it for granted, of course, that our mail, in both directions, was monitored, just as our phones were tapped and our conduct and 'mood'—ranging from 'friendly' to 'unfriendly'—were under remorseless surveillance. Our secretaries, chauffeurs, domestic help hardly bothered to hide the fact that they 'reported' on us in writing, often supplemented with personal visits to the security police.

What of the information and opinions that could not be cabled? We stored them up in memory against the day when we would write 'that book' about our Moscow experiences. (Mine was called *Assignment in Utopia.*) This explains why the most useful contributions to understanding of Soviet realities have been made by foreign correspondents in their writings *after* they left Moscow—provided they were resigned to having the doors of the Workers' Paradise closed against them. From decades of close observation I reached the conclusion that if the author of a book on Soviet Russia could go back, the book probably was not worth reading.

THE THIRTIES AND THE FIFTIES

Klaus Mehnert

I HAVE VISITED THE USSR 14 times in the course of the last 39 years, spending there a total of over five years. But only on two occasions did I stay any great length of time: from the spring of 1934 to early 1936, and again during the first six months of 1956. Both times I was reporting, the first time for three German newspapers (*Hamburger Fremdenblatt, Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten, Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*), the second time for all West German radio stations.

There is a general feeling that life was much tougher under Stalin than under Khrushchev. This was quite true for the Soviet citizen, but—in my experience—not for the foreign correspondent. In the thirties the foreigner enjoyed many privileges which only very few Russians had. Anyone who possessed legally foreign currency, gold or silver (i.e. most foreigners and, of course, all foreign correspondents, but only very few Soviet citizens), could buy what he liked, at a low price, in the *Torgsin* shops; there he found about all he really needed. In addition he might purchase goods with rubles in the various types of Soviet stores and markets. In the mid-fifties, however, the foreigner could only use the general shops which only accepted rubles, which he had to obtain at an exorbitantly unfavourable rate.

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But man lives not by bread alone, as we have learned from the Bible, from Dudintsev and finally from Svetlana. The correspondent lives by the copy he files. This involves two problems: how to obtain the news and how to get it out.

To get the news is, no doubt, much easier today than under Stalin. The Soviet press is far more informative and interesting than it used to be and once in a while there are even press conferences. More important still, in the mid-fifties there was Khrushchev; you could meet him every few days at some reception or other whenever a foreign statesman visited the Soviet capital or at the national day celebrations of the more important embassies—and he was always exuberant, accessible, and talkative. (Times have changed since; the styles of Khrushchev and of Kosygin are as different as their physiognomies.) Stalin you could see only very rarely and from a distance, during the parades in Red Square and hardly anywhere else.

But, in my experience at least, I found the non-official people far more easy to approach in the thirties than 20 years later. Of course, I was in Moscow before the start of the great purge which scared the Russians away from all foreigners. But during the years 1929 to 1934, when I visited the USSR every year, and in 1934–36, when I lived there, it was not difficult to strike up an acquaintanceship and to follow it up by either inviting the person home or even visiting him. My wife and I often had Russians at our home—artists, students, and professional people; we went to the theatre with them and on picnics. Without much difficulty I once received permission to spend a few days with the Moscow *Osoaviakhim*, the paramilitary youth organization of those days; I went with them to their camp and even to their target practice. On another occasion I spent a week at a Young Pioneer camp. It is true that I went out of my way to do these things; many others did not. The point is that you could do them if you wished.

THE GREAT DIFFERENCE I found between my first and my second term as a foreign correspondent in Moscow was in the opportunities for travel—in the old days it was far easier to get around. At that time there were certain areas (only a very small fraction of the Soviet territory) which were closed to foreigners, and of them of course I stayed clear. Elsewhere you could travel as much as you wished without a special permit—if (and this was a big IF) you were willing to suffer the same hardships as the Russians. Of course, if you wished to travel by sleeping car, if you wanted to be sure of having a hotel room upon arrival and perhaps even an interpreter-guide, then you had to apply through the proper channels which was a tedious and sometimes unsuccessful undertaking. Otherwise you just went ahead.

I know it sounds unbelievable, but it is true just the same: during my first term I travelled widely—to the Arctic Ocean, to the Caspian, through Siberia, even through the starvation areas devastated by Stalin's class war in the countryside—without ever having to ask for permission.

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All I had to do was go to the ticket counter and buy a ticket—if one was available. Often there was none. Then I had to wait, sometimes for several days, and was forced to sleep in smelly waiting rooms because of the shortage of hotels. Once I even had to jump on a moving train outside the station, having been unable to board legally one of the overcrowded trans-Siberian trains on its way back to the capital.

It was totally different in 1956. The press section of the Foreign Ministry made it clear to all foreign correspondents that they needed special permits to travel in the interior. When I went to Siberia, I had to present the press section with a list of places I wanted to visit. Some of them were scratched off my list; for the remainder I had to announce in advance the exact time of arrival and departure and to arrange accommodation with *Intourist*. Only after all that was done was I given my permit and my tickets.

The one undeniable improvement today is the absence of an *ante-factum* censorship. But in 1956 it still existed for all copy filed by telegram or telephone, just as in the thirties. The only change was that in the old days the censor was in the Foreign Ministry, whereas in the fifties he had his office in the Central Telegraph Office. But the stubborness of the censor had not mellowed during these two decades. Furthermore he was now anonymous: you never saw him (or them). You handed your copy through a small window to a clerk, then you waited for your name to be called, wondering what would be left of your prose; I am still waiting for one of my reports concerning Khrushchev's 'secret speech'. In the old days you knew the censors, you chatted with them, you even bargained; both the censor and you knew that the other had a job to do and in the end some compromise formula was found. To be sure, there were only a few foreign correspondents in Moscow in those days, in fact few foreigners at all, which was an advantage.

Mail copy could be sent without censorship as it can today. But you could still get in trouble for it once the censor had received the printed article from your home country. Sometimes this was unpleasant, and sometimes a journalist had to leave the country. This was true both of the thirties and of the fifties.

TODAY AND YESTERDAY

Hermann Pörzgen

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE a Western correspondent in Moscow these days? How does the correspondent of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* make out? The latest, and personally and professionally perhaps most significant, change has been brought about by his recent acquisition of a five-room apartment for his family of four. The everyday life of

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the foreign correspondent is beginning to reflect the gradual rise in general living standards. There was a time when most correspondents lived for years on end in hotel rooms. Then, in 1961, nearly all of them moved to new blocks of flats which had been built for foreign residents. The blocks are beautifully situated on the Kutusovsky Prospekt near the shores of the Moskva and close to the well-known skyscraper hotel 'Ukraina'. This spacious settlement now contains modern shops, including two Western currency shops. Foreigners in possession of convertible currency can buy there many of those otherwise scarce goods which a normal Western household needs. The settlement also contains a number of Russian nurseries which foreign children are allowed to attend. Foreign diplomats, journalists or airline representatives had at first to make do with comparatively small flats which scarcely satisfied their needs. At a later stage, more spacious apartments were built. Last year, finally, nearly all reasonable requirements were met. UPDK, the office in charge of facilities for the diplomatic corps, provided a house in a new block, also on the Kutusovsky Prospekt, for the special use of foreign correspondents. The provision of better living quarters may be connected with the Soviet desire to secure fresh sources of foreign currency. At any rate, the authorities gave preference to applicants from Western countries who could pay in hard currency. Until then, the representatives of communist countries with their weak currencies had for many years received preferential treatment in the provision of accommodation and the supply of goods.

THE WORKING DAY OF THE correspondent in the Soviet capital starts at 8 a.m. (Moscow time), when the postwoman brings the morning papers. Mail in Moscow is delivered three or four times on weekdays and twice on Sundays. Provincial and foreign newspapers arrive with the midday post, which also delivers journals and magazines—a particularly valuable source of information. Their study, however, requires not only a good command of the Russian language but also the ability to read between the lines. Failure in this respect accounts for much of the inaccurate reporting about the Soviet Union.

Not everyone can bring himself to spend six hours every day on the reading of Soviet newspapers and magazines, especially as most of them are extraordinarily tedious. In any case, the correspondent relies generally on other sources of information. Many important items he can gather directly—from the press gallery of the Supreme Soviet, in the Congress Hall of the Kremlin, or at diplomatic receptions. Television provides him with the opportunity to watch the countless state occasions. Teleprinters enable him to keep up with the news which the Soviet news agency TASS receives in the course of the day. He telephones his fellow correspondents to exchange views and information, and he keeps in touch with the more important diplomatic missions, especially that of his own country. He must also keep up with news in the Western world—a very different picture from that presented by Soviet news-

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so as to be able to assess Soviet reactions quickly and accurately. Two or three times a week he attends press conferences dealing with topical problems, which are arranged by Soviet government agencies or other institutions, and which are usually attended by prominent personalities. The questions asked on such occasions and the answers given enable him to get official views of members of the government, scientists or artists. Foreign correspondents receive invitations to see new films prior to their general release. Small groups of journalists are provided with facilities for interesting tours to various parts of the country, sometimes including areas not yet open to foreign travellers.

The official government paper *Izvestia* appears in the evening. By the time it reaches the correspondent of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, he has literally only a few minutes left before the editorial deadline to inform Frankfurt by telephone about any important piece of information or editorial opinion contained in *Izvestia*. Of course, all the leading newspapers of the world insist on continuous, independent reports from their own correspondents. Even during the silly season—or perhaps especially then—they expect their correspondents to provide them with a steady flow of interesting stories and information.

Nobody can be a foreign correspondent in a world centre like Moscow who insists on working a seven or eight-hour day or a five-day week. News cannot be contained in office hours. An example is the manner in which the correspondent of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* learnt of Khrushchev's overthrow. He had spent the evening at the Bolshoi Theatre at an official memorial celebration in honour of the poet Lermontov. As a matter of routine, he went, on his way home, to the bureau of United Press International which has its office in the immediate vicinity of his own apartment. As United Press International maintains continuous teleprinter contacts with all the capitals of the world, one can always get the latest information there. The head of its Moscow bureau, Henry Schapiro, and the correspondent of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* are the two doyens, so to speak, of the foreign press corps accredited to the Kremlin. They have also been friends since the mid-1930s. During the three decades which have passed since then, about half their lifetime, they have both wholly engrossed themselves in the inexhaustible topic of the Soviet Union. In the mid-1930s, there were only a dozen foreign correspondents in Moscow, among them three Americans and two Germans. The current list of accredited correspondents in the Soviet capital includes approximately one hundred and fifty journalists, among them twenty Americans and ten Germans.

IN 1941, TWO DAYS before the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, Henry Schapiro arrived at the apartment of the correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*.* He brought a telegram from the Stockholm

* The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* was founded after the war. It inherited some of the correspondents of its pre-war predecessor, *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

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bureau of United Press International which read: 'German troops will cross Russian border Stop please watch.' Schapiro scrutinized everything in that small German apartment on the Tverskoi Boulevard, but he found no signs of panic, no packed trunks or other indications of impending departure. 'How can I watch?', he asked resignedly. Notwithstanding the rumours then floating around abroad, a correspondent in Moscow had at that time no better information than the German diplomats there whom Berlin kept deliberately in the dark. Still, when the German press attaché, in the small hours of Sunday, 22 June, roused the correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* out of his sleep to take him 'without luggage' into the extra-territorial Embassy building, the latter still managed to warn his friend Schapiro. 'Please, watch', he said, recalling the words of the Stockholm telegram. So Henry Schapiro provided United Press International with one of its great scoops, within the first hours after Hitler's invasion, in the form of an exclusive report from a still wholly ignorant capital. The Soviet public learnt of the fateful event only at midday when Molotov, the then Foreign Minister, gave the news in a broadcast. Henry Schapiro's main competitor, the correspondent of Associated Press, had used that lovely summer day to go bathing in a place outside Moscow where none of the telegrams and telephone calls of his frantic New York editors reached him.

'CARO CENSORE'

Vero Roberti

LENIN ONCE WROTE THAT censorship is more harmful to those who administer it than to those who have to put up with it. During my first stay in Moscow, from 1956 to 1960, we, the foreign correspondents, had to contend with the censors; during my second stay, from 1962 to 1965, we were no longer concerned with them.

They were always mysterious, ghostlike beings. In spite of all our efforts, manoeuvres, and subterfuges, we never succeeded in catching a glimpse of our censors' faces. We knew that they existed, we also knew all the hateful signs of their bureaucratic mental rigidity, but officially they did not exist because, so far as the Soviet government was concerned, censorship did not exist. One particularly hypocritical argument about this propaganda fiction was concocted by the then head of the press office in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Leonid Ilichev, 'whose head was as hard as Molotov's backside'. He used to tell us that censorship did not exist and that *Glavlit*, the censorship office, performs only a literary function. According to Ilichev, his job was not to censor our correspondence, but to improve and perfect our

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literary style, a declaration which he often repeated with the seriousness of a man who would never dream of stopping the sun from shining down out of a cloudless sky.

PERSONALLY, I FELT VERY sorry for my censor. One day I thought I would tempt him. The first week of the Italian film festival brought me my opportunity. This festival used to attract a huge, noisy crowd to the entrance of one of the cinemas in the suburbs, a crowd composed mainly of youths who could not obtain a ticket because they had already been sold to members of Soviet cultural organizations. I managed to buy, via the Italian Embassy, a series of 14 tickets, two for each evening. I memorized the seat numbers and I offered the tickets to my 'dear friend', the censor, with the secret hope that I should be able to single him out at long last. But unfortunately, the seats that I had cunningly offered him remained empty for the whole week. Defeated, I sent him a note, honestly confessing the hidden purpose of my generosity. I ended the note by referring to the classic proverb of the traders who 'went for wool and came home shorn'.

Having swallowed my defeat, I managed to charm one day a pretty employee at the Telegraph Office, who usually took my papers and handed them over to the censor. She would disappear behind a door, beyond which were situated the secret offices of the censor. When the censor had finished his shameful work, he would press a button, and a red light would light up underneath the counter in the main hall separating the employees from the public, to indicate that the censored text was ready to be collected. Then one day my charming friend told me that there were two censors for the Italian language. One was an old lady, who liked my little flippancies and the detached way in which I applied myself to ideological problems, and the other was a young man who hated me. Whenever I arrived at the Telegraph Office I used to ask my friendly intermediary *sotto voce* 'Is it he or she?' And if it were the old lady (perhaps of Italian stock) I would make my daily compilation more emphatic. But if it was the young man, then I became infinitely more cautious.

ON THE MORNING OF 23 October 1958, the BBC announced that Boris Pasternak had been awarded the Nobel Prize. In the evening, I was to dispatch to my newspaper a short interview with Boris Pasternak. Fear of the censor induced me and my colleagues, Nicolas Chatelain and Michel Tatu, to describe our meeting with the poet in the most innocuous terms, in order not to upset the sensibility of our censors. It had been easy to guess that the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Pasternak would unchain the wrath of the Soviet apostles of 'socialist realism'.

In fact, we had to wait on that evening for more than three hours before the censor gave us back the copies of our articles. Nicolas, Michel and I had been the only three foreign correspondents to reach

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the *dacha* of Pasternak at Peredelkino. We had caught the electric train; the other correspondents who had ventured forth in their cars along the Minsk road had been stopped and turned back by the police before reaching the crossroads at Peredelkino.

This is the story I gave to my paper, the italicized words in brackets are those which were cut by the censor. I still keep the original copies with the stamp of the censor as a melancholy reminder of my first four years in Moscow. Read in this form it can serve as a vivid illustration of the mentality of the Soviet censors and of the way they work:

> We got off the electric train at the station of Peredelkino at 15.30. It was raining. When the train drew away we noticed the dreariness of the landscape and its melancholy air. Nicolas asked a Caucasian woman the way to the *dacha* of Pasternak, and she said 'In spring and summer, the countryside and the woods are just like a corner of Paradise'. She showed us the road. 'Walk along the lines until you come to a path on your right. Follow it, and then ask. (*Everyone knows where Boris Leonidovich lives. Everyone loves him. He is a great poet.*')
>
> We walked along the lines in the direction of a distant wood of fir trees. We asked another woman where Pasternak lived and she pointed out to us a *dacha* with a roof of galvanized iron, painted a reddish-brown colour. It looked like a paper castle of the type which children forty years ago cut out and assembled during the winter days. ('*Boris Leonidovich*', *the woman said to us*, '*is a great poet. We learned this morning that he has won a very important foreign prize. I believe they said it was in Stockholm*'.) . . .
>
> The writer sat opposite us. He had an intelligent face, lit up with a glowing inner strength. He was a man alone with his thoughts, with his poetry, with his world. Perhaps he felt like a survivor who had continued to live, without rebuking the new world surrounding him.
>
> His hair was grey. His face was hollow and his eyes a strange vivid chestnut-brown colour. He talked in French and, as my colleagues were French, he broke off every now and then to ask them the precise etymology of his words.
>
> 'I am very grateful to you for coming as far as Peredelkino to see me', he said. 'I am pleased with the news which was brought to me last night by one of my neighbours.[1] (*It was nearly 2 o'clock when he came to knock on my door. He said that he had learned on the radio that my book, "Doctor Zhivago", had won the Nobel Prize, and then he embraced me and told me how overjoyed he was.*) But today my happiness at winning the Nobel Prize is a lonely happiness. (*I should so much like it to be shared by everyone—my friends and colleagues—my country.*')
>
> 'I have not yet received the news officially', he replied in answer to one of my questions ('*and I shall postpone my decision until the Soviet authorities let me know what they think*). I cannot tell you, therefore, whether I shall be going to Stockholm.' Then, after a pause, he said to us: ('*But why did they want to give me the*

[1] It was Konstantin Fedin.

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Nobel Prize? I am not so great. My poetry, my art are only my poetry and my art. The honour conferred upon me is too great. Oh, how I should like to share it with my brothers!')

The writer talked to us of his book. ('*It is not an autobiography; but the whole of my life and my suffering are displayed in my novel. I have been told that I am Dr Zhivago myself. Perhaps I am like him because, just like Dr Zhivago, I love my native land which I would not abandon for all the money in the world.*) Ten years ago I started to write my novel. But I had already been thinking about it for many years. And, at that time, my passion was for the great symbolist Blok and for Rainer Maria Rilke. . . . I am really ashamed at talking to you about my affairs. Excuse me. Excuse my immodesty, but it is better that we talk about my book rather than the Nobel Prize . . . (*I understand full well that my novel will never be published in my own country. Perhaps, many years after my death, it will be published. Why? I ask myself often, but I do not know how to reply.*) I am really ashamed to admit to you that I have received so many letters from Italy, France, England and the United States. (*And everyone says kind things to me, things which I don't deserve.*) . . . I hope that the winter passes very quickly because in the spring I should like to start my new novel. (*It will be a novel which has to do with contemporary events, the people that I see around me, my people, the people of my country. It will be a novel in which I shall not forget—although I have been incorrectly criticized as doing so—that I am a poet.*) A poet is not simply a person who writes in verse. One can write in prose and make poetry out of it. This is what I interpret a writer to be, according to my modernity, or according to my period; but it is essential that I frame my new novel within the history of contemporary Europe.'

ON 30 OCTOBER 1958 I visited Boris Pasternak at Peredelkino for the second time. From the brief article that I presented to the censor that same evening not even a comma was salvaged:

The poet received me immediately, embraced me and told me that he was extremely upset about and even afraid of the criticism and accusations of the Soviet press.

'The Union of Writers has expelled me', he told me, 'and today it has sent three doctors with the task of looking after my health. They are waiting for me through there. Why? I really do not understand.' Then, after a pause he added, 'Why am I covered in dirt from head to foot? It is not true that I am an unnecessary person, a dangerous weed, a refugee in my own country, a mean Philistine, a traitor. Good God, how many insults and lies! And today they send three doctors, even though they all know that I am only suffering from a light attack of sinusitis. Why? Now I must go and see them; wait here for me please!'

A terrible thought struck me, and I said to Boris Leonidovich that I wished to be present during the visit of the doctors. But Pasternak replied, 'Thank you, it is better that you wait here'. I insisted, and suddenly the poet guessed my thoughts. He paled,

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and then, after a long sigh, put his hand on my shoulder and in a soft voice said, 'Thank you, thank you. I understand your fear. But what can I lose now? I am already dead.'

After 20 minutes he reappeared and exclaimed, 'They haven't found out anything new to talk about regarding my health!'

'Let us sit down', he said, 'and discuss the unfortunate events of my novel a little. It is a good thing that you know I am not a traitor. I handed my novel over to a young Italian communist, Signor Sergio d'Angelo,[2] who represented an Italian editor in Moscow at the time, and this same editor gave permission to publish it, in accordance with Goslitizdat or rather with the Soviet organization for literary works, with whom I had signed a regular contract for the publication of my book "Doctor Zhivago".

'My Italian editor must have in his file a letter from Goslitizdat which is of great importance as a proof of my honesty. In its letter, Goslitizdat begged the Italian editor to delay the publication of my novel so that the Italian translation could come out at the same time as the Russian edition, which was due to be published at about the beginning of September. Indeed, for reasons of convenience and editorial exactitude, the date requested by Goslitizdat was 1 September 1957.[3] I must also tell you that many of the signatories of the letter from the editorial board of the journal "Novy Mir" also form an authoritative part of the board of directors of Goslitizdat. I have never received this letter, even though it was dated 24 October 1956; I read it for the first time in the "Literaturnaya Gazeta" five days ago. It is true that I sent my novel to my dear friend, Alexander Trofimovich [Tvardovsky], who edits "Novy Mir", but I understand perfectly how he, a little while later, was forced to give up the publication of "Doctor Zhivago" in spite of the agreement drawn up between his magazine and Goslitizdat.

'I am not a traitor and I did not wish to cheat my country by sending the manuscript of my novel abroad secretly, as I have been accused of doing. I am the victim of a conspiracy and I do not understand the reasons for it. When you and your colleagues came to visit me six days ago I told you that my novel could not have been published in the Soviet Union. I knew what I was saying, but I did not tell you everything.'

'I knew', Pasternak continued, 'that the Union of Writers and the CPSU had put the screws on the Italian editor in order to make him give up the publication, in spite of the agreement drawn up with Goslitizdat, and to send the manuscript back. Even your Palmiro Togliatti lent himself to their game. . . .'

'I am profoundly humiliated and frightened too. I have never harmed anyone. Why do they wish to kill me morally? I do not think you will be able to write what I have told you, but I beg you, remember it!'

[2] After his experience in the Pasternak affair, Signor Sergio d'Angelo left the Italian Communist Party.

[3] In 1956 Moscow Radio and then the magazine *Znamya* (no. 4, 1957) announced the future publication of *Dr Zhivago* in the USSR.

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ON THE MORNING of 31 May 1960 the Western journalists were the first to place flowers around the remains of Boris Pasternak. They were followed by his friend, Konstantin Paustovsky. On 2 June, Pasternak was buried beneath three solitary pines on the slope of a hill which dominated the tranquil, green plain of Peredelkino.

In the evening I telephoned the following report to my newspaper, which was severely cut by the censor. Again, the italicized words are those that displeased the censor:

> . . . the plain of Peredelkino has been the scene today of a long (*and gloomy*) human drama (*a political and ideological drama which only a few people have witnessed and seen in depth*): the drama of the death of a very great poet on his last journey (*head held high*), beneath the sun, before his native land (*and his friends, for the most part young people who had come from Leningrad and Kiev*) . . . It was a strange crowd (more than 1,000 people), who had gathered together to bid a last farewell to Pasternak. This ceremony is called *panikhida* in Russian because (*it presupposes the presence of the cross, the symbol of the Christian religion. But the body of Pasternak was accompanied to the grave and buried without any benediction whatsoever. This is one of the most gloomy aspects of the poet's funeral, organized with literary aid funds*) by the same Union of Writers which had expelled Pasternak for his betrayal in October 1958, after he had been awarded the Nobel Prize.
>
> A little before 17.00 the body of the poet, in his coffin, was carried towards the cemetery (*by two young men*[4] *who had come from Leningrad and Kiev*).
>
> The coffin was lowered into the grave, and the crowd of friends gathered round the three solitary pines, twisted with age, but still upstanding. A friend of the poet, the philosopher Valentin Asmus, gave a talk to all present (*young men and old, men and women, friends of the poet and peasants from Peredelkino*), which he concluded by saying that Pasternak was critical of his own work and that he loved and respected the work of his neighbour: (*Simple folk loved and respected him*). 'I am sure that, in spite of the discussion that has raged regarding his name and his work, Boris Leonidovich (*will remain for ever in the memory of man!*')
>
> (*Suddenly, a young workman shouted out: 'Thank you, Boris Leonidovich for the novel that you have left us and which we have not yet been able to read!' And there was a profound silence*); then an old actor recited some of Pasternak's poetry. There was applause and the coffin was covered over. As the face of the poet disappeared from view for ever, bunches of flowers were thrown, then clods of earth. For a few seconds the earth falling on the coffin gave rise to the echo of a very distant roll of thunder. Then, in silence, the grave was filled in.
>
> With tears running down their faces, the crowd of people began to make their way back down the hill. Only a few young people

[4] The two young men who carried the coffin were Sinyavsky and Daniel.

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remained underneath the three pines, reading the poetry of Pasternak (*as if on a modern hill of Golgotha*).

UNKNOWN TO US, our daily experience with the censor had influenced our style. Each one of us, the foreign correspondents, was writing in a 'hermetically-sealed' manner, trying to say more than the censor allowed us to say. But we were fooling ourselves when we thought that our newspapers and news agencies understood our sophisticated abstruseness. They were not fully conversant with the difficulties of the daily war we waged with the censor.

When a rift was detected between Moscow and Peking, we knew, of course, that the revisionists were the Russians and the dogmatists were the Chinese. But we could not say this because the argument between Moscow and Peking developed in an abstract way between two phantom ideological schools. *Pravda* and other Soviet publications held their tongues about the characteristics of their opponents so that we could not say that the dogmatists lived in the Far East, or that they had yellow skin and almond eyes. We imagined that everyone in the West was curious and even anxious to know who these damned dogmatists were, but all our attempts at enlightenment failed miserably. Already wary of our profession, the censors became suspicious.

One day I had an idea. Having referred to an article from *Pravda* which accused the dogmatists of some ideological madness, I added this sentence to my text: 'Marco Polo went on a journey.' These words did not link up with either the previous or the following sentence and had nothing to do with the subject. Indeed, the censor must have thought that I had suddenly gone mad, but he left in the words and gave me back my sheet of paper untouched. I felt as if I had won first prize in a tremendously rich sweepstake, and I immediately informed Max Frankel of the *New York Times*, Tom Lambert of the *New York Herald Tribune*, Preston Grove of the Associated Press and Bob Elfic of Reuter of my 'victory' These friends of mine followed my example and experienced the same fortune. We were happy because at long last our Western headquarters would know that the dogmatists were the Chinese communists. But, unfortunately, our headquarters only thought what the censors had thought, and disregarded our 'Marco Polo' reference.

Our frustration was greater when we had to report conversations with Khrushchev. When he talked to us, either at the Kremlin or at some embassy, there were always difficulties. The former Prime Minister of the USSR used to amuse himself and display temper like a child, a wayward child, and he loved to argue with Western journalists. It was at times like these that we saw the censors becoming insane, and we had to wait until they had calmed down. Khrushchev was the bane of their lives, both for his foolery and his boasting. To facilitate the job of the censors we were anxious to see that our accounts were absolutely identical, and so, beside the most important sentences we

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used to repeat the transcription in Russian to avoid any argument and, above all, any delay. Perhaps to revenge himself for our impertinence or our cynicism, Khrushchev used to talk to us only in order to submit us afterwards to exhausting delays, because the censors had, in their turn, to ask and wait for the authority of their superiors before releasing our texts.

The hours wasted in waiting for the decision of the censor were the curse of our life. In my four years I hung round just waiting for no less than 4,500 hours. Moreover, a lot of it was in vain. Quite a number of my manuscripts are still with the *Glavlit* censors, waiting for approval. As the queue is long, it may still take some time before I get them back.

When I returned to Moscow at the end of 1962, the censorship for foreign correspondents had already been abolished for a year. Since then, in some respects at least, I have come to miss our old meeting place, the Central Telegraph Office, where only a few yards away sat the censors ready to pull to pieces everything that we wrote. In our battles with them we had our moments of triumph, when we got over their annoyance and succeeded in informing the world on subjects of interest, despite their resistance and all the obstacles put in our way. Now we were on our own. We had to censor ourselves, with no help from outside.

KHRUSHCHEV AND THE PRESS

Arrigo Levi

WHEN I FIRST REACHED Moscow, at the beginning of July 1960 (Stalin's bust still greeted you at the Belorusski Station, side by side with Lenin's), Powers was about to be brought to trial, and the Soviet experts had just been secretly withdrawn from China. Censorship was, at the time, the dominating factor in our life, our daily worry, sorely trying our nerves and contributing to our critical attitude towards Soviet reality. The newcomer was immediately taught by colleagues how and how not to behave towards the censor.

I think I was one of the very first Westerners in Moscow to learn about the withdrawal of Russian experts and technicians from China, and to be given a complete picture of the critical situation of Sino-Soviet relations. I deserve no particular credit for getting this information, I was just plain lucky. Obeying the first rule of responsible journalism, I checked it with a colleague, as we were walking, one sunny evening, up and down the pavement outside the Central Telegraph Office. My colleague, Michel Tatu, had also just learnt the news from a source which luckily proved to be different from mine. So we both filed long stories, in which we related the usual rigmarole about the sins of the 'dogmatists'.

In those days the censor would never have allowed us to use openly

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the word 'Chinese'. So we called them 'dogmatists' while the Russians were known as 'revisionists'. Other precautions which had to be taken so as not to anger the censor occasionally made it difficult for the reader to understand our meaning. I well remember one particular occasion: the censor kept my story for two days, instead of several hours as usual, and returned it cut by half. The censor had shown his anger by cutting out with scissors the offending passages, instead of simply crossing them out with pencil. Nevertheless, I sent off my copy, carefully indicating the number of words deleted. (We, the Italian correspondents, were the only ones who used to do this; our newspapers printed the stories we sent and indicated to the reader the number of 'words struck out by censorship'; as far as I know, no other Western paper did the same.) Usually, this method was quite effective: the reader's imagination was able to fill in the gaps. However, on this occasion my story was so badly mauled by the censor that it proved incomprehensible even to my sub-editor: the title showed quite clearly that the poor man had understood that there was a crisis inside the Soviet leadership, not between the Russians and the Chinese. It took another couple of similarly allusive stories before the meaning was made clear. Then in late autumn, the Moscow Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties was convened, and suddenly one evening the censor allowed the forbidden word 'Chinese' to pass. I do not remember which correspondent first used it; we all worked together at the time, as one big family, with AP and UPI behaving as loving and trusting brothers, and the rest following. So the Chinese remained the Chinese for the duration of the Conference; once it ended, however, with a precarious bargain struck between Moscow and Peking, the Chinese had to become 'dogmatists' once more.

I HAPPENED TO LIVE in Moscow during a period of changing myths. The Western man's view of Soviet reality, at that time, vacillated between opposite and alternative myths. Was Russia the country of the sputniks? Or was it the country where water taps never worked, and where the common man still led a life more reminiscent of the nineteenth than the twentieth century? A journalist who was conscientious in carrying out his role of destroyer of myths always ran the risk of building up one myth while destroying the opposite one. The climax came, perhaps, when Gagarin circled the earth, and one had to explain at the same time that the Russian housewife could not find even potatoes in the market and shops. I did my very best to try and make people understand how these two apparently contradictory realities were not contradictory at all: the one would have been impossible without the other, and there could not have been any sputniks without the greatest sacrifices in everyday life. I at least succeeded in making the Russians angry: some weeks later an attack in *Izvestia*, which called me a pig and a Nazi and threatened me with expulsion, seemed to show that I had indeed touched a sensitive area.

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A foreign reporter sometimes finds himself in the happy position of being able to help the Russians discover themselves. Indeed, the foreign 'bourgeois' press in the early sixties was a great help to the young nonconformist Russian writers. It made them famous in the wide world, it helped in getting them the support of influential Western communists, it gave them self-confidence and courage in facing official persecution. I remember when the Moscow correspondents of Western communist papers (they were on the whole good men, conscientiously trying to do a good job of reporting in very difficult practical and psychological circumstances) used to be called back angrily by their editors because they had not reported on this or that event in the literary world, a poem by Evtushenko or an instalment of Ehrenburg's memoirs, which had been splashed all over the 'bourgeois' press, thanks to the painstaking efforts of the Western press community in Moscow. In order to keep up with 'bourgeois' competition, *Unita* published in full (the first paper in the West to do so) Evtushenko's 'Baby Yar'; and one knew that this support, which the Western communist correspondents in Moscow had indirectly assured him, was quite useful to the then daring young poet in his struggles with the authorities.

Looking back on the total effect of Western reporting from Moscow in those crucial years, I think I can say with some satisfaction that we made a genuine contribution in making Russia real to the Western public. We forced, for instance, the communist press in Italy and France to provide its readers with a much more realistic appraisal of Russian reality. We helped to destroy the old Stalinist myth of Russia as the Land of the Future. The public came to regard Russia as it did other countries, appraising it with a more critical and realistic approach, no longer as a moral choice between good and evil.

So I believe that my generation of Moscow correspondents—which included Tatu of *Le Monde*, Topping of the *New York Times*, Ronchey of *La Stampa*, Kalb of CBS and many others just as worthy of mention—can look back on its years in Moscow with satisfaction for the contribution it made in debunking the myths about Soviet reality.

FIGHTING AGAINST MYTHS, even if difficult and sometimes unrewarding, can be one of the most interesting occupations in the world. Journalism is an activity which oscillates uncertainly between story-telling and prophecy. One day you feel like Jeremiah warning the world of incumbent dangers and leading it on the narrow path of virtue and safety, the next day you return to gossip. However, the main problem in Russia is that of understanding what the 'real country' is. It is no good saying that this problem arises every time you visit a new country. In a totalitarian country, finding out 'the truth' is really a despairing job. One starts from the obvious assumption that there are two co-existing realities, the 'official' one and the 'real' one. But then the official image is also important: by watching all the time the 'ghost' country, of which one catches fascinating glimpses through occasional tears in

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the brightly painted curtain, one sometimes forgets that the curtain itself can represent something real.

Sooner or later one also reaches the conclusion that the main difficulty in knowing the Russians as they really are stems from the fact that they themselves do not know what they are. As soon as a totalitarian country is able to express itself freely, it not only discovers that it is different from what it appeared to be, but it *becomes* different. The 'ghost' reality of unexpressed wishes, hates and hopes acquires finally the necessary self-expression and self-consciousness.

Therefore, the foreign correspondent in Moscow is not in a much more difficult position than the Soviet citizen. Finding out what Russia is really like is just as difficult for both. Also, in order to judge one object one must be able to compare it with similar objects. Up to a certain point, therefore, the foreign observer in Russia is better able to judge Russian reality than the Russians themselves, because he can compare it with something else—this the Soviet citizen, ignorant of both past and present outside the narrow boundaries of dogmatic truths, cannot do.

I do not mean to imply by this that reporting from Moscow is an easy job. But I definitely believe that if one finds it difficult to understand Russian reality, one is at least in very good company: that of some 235 million Soviet citizens.

REFLECTIONS ON COMING BACK

Robert J. Korengold

TO THIS DAY FEW ANECDOTES about the USSR get a warmer response from foreign journalists in Moscow than the one about Nikita Khrushchev stopping unexpectedly during his reign at an obviously run-down collective farm.

'You there, comrade', he waves to a passing kolkhoznik. 'How is your crop this year?'

'Couldn't be better', comes the reply.

'And your farm chairman?'

'Salt of the earth', the kolkhoznik insists.

'And your living conditions?'

'Superb', the farmer retorts.

'Listen here', interrupts an enraged Nikita. 'You can't fool me. Don't you know who I am?'

'Oh, Nikita Sergeyevich', apologizes the kolkhoznik as he suddenly recognizes his nation's leader. 'I'm so sorry. I thought you were a foreign correspondent.'

The story, of course, is dated. But it still illustrates the perennial dilemma for a foreign, non-communist journalist stationed in the USSR:

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getting anyone to give him an official answer about anything or a response that is not varnished beyond belief.

For all the 'liberalization' of Soviet society in recent years, for all the technical improvements in communications facilities and procedures, the main frustration for a Moscow correspondent remains the nation's traditional bent for secrecy about everything from top-level politics to simple telephone numbers. To use Soviet jargon, 'it is well known' that no announcements are made of what the nation's next space effort will be or when, and 'life itself' has taught journalists not to expect information about how many Soviet rockets are on the launching-pad and where.

But the shroud spreads everywhere over what would be considered normal public information elsewhere. The last Moscow private subscribers' telephone book (a collector's item) was issued and snapped up in 1961. Most other cities have none. When I first arrived in Russia in 1959 Moscow city maps were almost non-existent. Now some relatively detailed ones are available, but none which shows or indexes all streets. Few other cities have more than rudimentary outlines. Statistics, as always, shower down about those things the Soviets want to stress—numbers of students, nurseries, libraries, hospitals or rest homes. But they are usually rigged to mislead. And a correspondent will have to dig long and hard for even the most basic information on anything unfavourable like juvenile delinquency, drug-taking, crime, or mental disorders.

A diligent reporter can, of course, glean bits of information here and there from the press or well-placed Soviet acquaintances. But as a rule, from Central Committee level on up, the curtain of secrecy is virtually impenetrable, not only for political news, but even for much basic information about the nation's leaders.

Probably few correspondents in Moscow today, even those with long experience of the Soviet Union, can pinpoint exactly, for instance, where the top Soviet leaders reside, much less peek into their private lives, or guarantee their whereabouts at any given moment.

Secrecy often seems to be for its own sake alone. Twice during my tenure in the Khrushchev era correspondents were summoned to the Kremlin to watch and photograph the signing of what they were told blandly and without further explanation was 'a document'. Eventually, when it appeared later in the Soviet press, it turned out to be each time a Warsaw Pact declaration. But why not say so?

Similarly, when 81 communist parties held a world summit conference in Moscow in 1960 not a word appeared about it from Soviet official sources until it was over. Correspondents knew, of course, from departure reports abroad, that the crowned heads of communism were in town. But on the spot they had little to work with except thumb-sucking speculation and romanticized accounts of black 'Chaikas' scudding across Red Square and lights burning late in the Kremlin.

High-level politics does not have to be involved, however. I

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remember once in 1965 trying for days to find out officially the pay of a Soviet army private. Finally I got an answer from the Ministry of Defence: 'Sufficient for his needs.'

Another time, a Moscow city traffic director claimed he could not answer my 'completely unexpected' inquiry as to how many cars circulated in the capital. He knew I would ask about the accident rate, however. When I did, he triumphantly pulled out the only statistic he said was available—the previous day's city-wide accident report. One cyclist had run into a tree.

Nothing, in fact, better illustrates for me the kind of pillow-punching a Moscow reporter goes through with Soviet officials than my exchange with a Foreign Ministry press department spokesman in 1959. Khrushchev had returned from a boisterous trip to America and was leaving by plane on the following day for Peking to explain it to Mao Tse-tung.

'Is Khrushchev flying non-stop?' I asked.

'It seems to me, yes' the official replied.

'Does that formulation mean you know or that it is just your opinion?' I inquired.

'It means it is just my opinion, of course', the official replied, poker-faced. 'When I know for sure, I say "maybe".'

Such mumbo-jumbo made perfect sense from his point of view, of course, for as new arrivals quickly learn, foreign correspondents in the USSR are still regarded at best with semi-suspicion by Soviet officialdom.

For reasons of prestige and reciprocity they have to be tolerated. But the system is set up to confine them as much as possible to officially arranged meetings or trips, culling from the Soviet press and exchanging gossip and opinion in the inbred diplomatic colony.

One Soviet official once asked me plaintively why, instead of running around trying to talk to people, I did not stay in my office and analyse *Pravda*. That would have pleased him, but of course no journalist in Moscow can be content with such a diet.

The Soviet press is gradually becoming franker and more informative each year. But it still is woefully unreliable both when it glorifies and when it criticizes. While much can be read between the lines (as the dwindling breed of real Kremlinologist correspondents like *Le Monde's* Michel Tatu has proved), it ignores, distorts and cannot be cross-examined.

Neither, satisfactorily, can the Foreign Ministry—the ordained official channel of communication between foreign correspondents and Soviet society. To most queries it responds with: 'we have no information', or 'you will be informed in due time'.

Tours and press conferences with ministers, distinguished scientists and public figures have become much more common in the last two or three years. But such ventures still tend to produce highly suspicious production claims and avoid problems with such regularity that even

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once-aggressive journalists get out of the habit of asking really probing questions.

Each passing year, of course, brings a slight improvement. But among Soviet officials—who clearly see little to gain and much to lose if they are quoted—there is still widespread reluctance to have any contact at all with foreign reporters.

In such an outwardly gloomy context, however, two essential points must be made. Firstly, in my opinion, a Moscow correspondent today still has a far greater opportunity to prove, analyse and illustrate what is happening to contemporary Soviet society than is generally assumed, and it becomes greater each year. Secondly, I think he can feel and report the pulse of what is—or is not—going on in many spheres with infinitely greater sensitivity than the most qualified Soviet specialist working abroad.

CERTAINLY THE GREATEST leap forward in my experience as a Moscow correspondent was the abolishment of formal prior censorship of outgoing dispatches in 1961.

Censorship of course was no novelty in Soviet Russia. It had been a semi-permanent feature of life under both Tsars and commissars. Old hands in Moscow insist that the early Soviet censorship, before everything froze in the purges of the thirties, was a relatively civilized battle of wits with well-educated officials who could be seen, argued with and sometimes convinced that a particular fact or wording should be allowed.

By the time I first arrived in the Soviet capital in May 1959, however, the Stalin era had left in its wake a faceless, machine-like censoring apparatus against whose decisions there was no right or method of appeal. Right up until its demise the Soviets never officially recognized it as censorship. They called it *Glavlit*, a title carried over from Tsarist times, and insisted it was simply a literary aid service to 'help' correspondents be more 'accurate'. The 'help' was mandatory, however, and accuracy was never the criterion. *Glavlit* would let any error of fact through as long as it was not deemed harmful to Soviet interests.

Censorship did not really affect the techniques of gathering the news in Moscow. But it created both a massive physical and mental barrier to its transmission.

Its physical location was behind a now almost legendary glass door covered by an ugly green curtain at the international section of the Moscow Central Telegraph Office, just a 10-minute walk up Gorky street from the Kremlin.

There were no telexes or teletypes then for non-communist journalists and one could not transmit anything for publication—from a football score to a political analysis—by mail, telegram, telephone or radio until it had been in and out of the green door and bore the *Glavlit imprimatur*, a tiny, jagged-shafted arrow enclosed in a circle. The symbol was such a haunting one for correspondents of the epoch that many sported a

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specially made Moscow tie bearing a *Glavlit*-inspired design—a quill pen and communist sickle inside an Orthodox Church cupola.

If a correspondent telephoned or broadcast words that had not been cleared by *Glavlit* his line was likely to go dead. They listened in. And agency men under demanding speed requirements could rarely afford to offend the censor and take the chance of having to go to the end of the queue again.

If a correspondent mailed uncensored copy and it was printed or intercepted he faced expulsion or a reprimand from the Foreign Ministry. If he telegraphed his copy *Glavlit* returned him a blue-pencilled carbon to show him what they had done. Waiting for *Glavlit* decisions usually occupied hours each day.

No one ever actually saw a *Glavlit* censor, although many attempts were made to coax them out beyond the green curtain. Once an Italian correspondent, Vero Roberti, sent in some hard-to-get ballet tickets, then stationed himself in a nearby seat at the theatre to see who showed up. No one did.

If journalists did not know the faces, they quickly learned the *Glavlit* mentality, however—extreme caution or thumbs down on anything at variance with the Soviet political line, personally critical of the Soviet leadership or portraying the Soviet Union in a bad light.

Truth was no help. I remember writing in 1959 that an American college group had been singing on Red Square 'within a stone's throw of Lenin's tomb'. *Glavlit* was not going to let anyone throw stones at Lenin under any circumstances. Out came the phrase.

Another time, when a French correspondent wrote that Nikita Khrushchev resembled Marlon Brando, his copy remained suspiciously long behind the green door. Eventually a telegraph employee came to ask the author on behalf of *Glavlit*: 'Who is Marlon Brando?'

'A very famous movie actor', came the reply.

More delay, then another question.

'Does Mr Brando play serious or comic roles?'

'Serious, of course.'

More delay. Then the copy was returned with all references to Brando and Khrushchev deleted. *Glavlit* took no chances.

Even Khrushchev was blue-pencilled sometimes. UPI bureau chief Henry Schapiro, the doyen of the Moscow press corps, once reported a Khrushchevian off-the-cuff remark that did not fit the Kremlin's official political line. When it arrived via *Glavlit* at UPI's London office it read simply: 'Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev said today quote . . . unquote.'

To beat *Glavlit*, correspondents became as devious as the censor. Essentials were usually buried deep in copy with the often unfulfilled hope that firstly *Glavlit* would not notice and secondly that editors on the other side would.

The vernacular, which *Glavlit's* minions often did not understand, was heavily employed. I remember transmitting the *Glavlit*-blocked

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news of an Austrian airliner's crash outside Moscow by razzle-dazzle use of American baseball terms. Another correspondent, Tom Lambert of the then *New York Herald Tribune*, described a Soviet official's unpopularity by claiming he was 'as popular as Sherman in Georgia' *Glavlit's* knowledge of American history did not extend to Sherman's scorched-earth sweep through the South in the Civil War and the phrase went through.

With caution *Glavlit* also could be and was used sometimes as a political sounding board. Correspondents learned ahead of time that a new line toward China was in the wind when *Glavlit* suddenly stopped censoring all comments about the Sino-Soviet split not long before the 22nd Party Congress in 1961. Another time *Glavlit* confirmed our suspicions that Khrushchev's one-time dauphin, Alexei Kirichenko, had fallen from grace by crossing out 'trusted' from a description of him as a 'trusted aide' of the Premier.

Looking back now such lighter moments remain the most vivid memories of the *Glavlit* era. But censorship was, in fact, a nerve-wracking procedure that dominated the whole reporting picture from the USSR at the time. It was exhausting and frustrating for correspondents. It tainted all the copy they did get through with the suspicion that something different might have been said if there were no censorship. It wrecked a journalist's style, forcing him to twist and turn copy until it would pass through the eye of *Glavlit's* needle, but losing all impact in the process. It inhibited the kind of balanced reporting about the USSR that its importance on the world scene demands. And worst of all, it was unnecessary and in the end ineffective.

Despite its wear and tear on both sides *Glavlit* was as leaky as a sieve. The most it did was delay for a day or two. Any hard news the censors stopped inevitably leaked out shortly afterward anyway in Helsinki, Paris, London or Washington.

I think censorship ended finally when the Soviets realized that its drawbacks outweighed its advantages. It took them a long time.

THE END OF GLAVLIT BROUGHT many associated changes in Moscow reporting, some good, some less so.

One thing *Glavlit* had done for Moscow correspondents was to make them a tightly-knit community. The Central Telegraph was, in those days, a sort of semi-official press club and hotel lobby for everyone awaiting the return of their carbons from behind the green curtain. There was no bar or restaurant and residents made do with thermos flasks and sandwiches provided upon occasion by compassionate wives. Yet the Telegraph in *Glavlit's* day was a centre through which all news and journalists passed each day, where ideas and stories were exchanged and where everyone was welded together by the same sort of smile-through-adversity camaraderie that one finds among army privates who all hate their top sergeant.

No longer forced to go out to the Central Telegraph when *Glavlit's*

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control was abolished, correspondents began working from homes and offices. Teletype and telex connexions (for some but far from all) made their appearance and Moscow became, inevitably, much more of a go-it-alone operation for a journalist.

With the end of *Glavlit* much of the frustration disappeared, but so did much of the extra excitement and glamour that made it worth while.

Nowadays, of course, the physical problems of communicating from Moscow are not extensively different from those elsewhere. Correspondents who do not have telexes or teletypes (so far only agencies have the latter) can send cables or photos with relative dispatch from the Central Telegraph. The sending of photos or undeveloped film by air requires Foreign Ministry permission, usually obtainable on non-controversial subjects. When it is not given the flow of outgoing tourists or residents will usually help solve the problem.

If transmission of copy has become easier, getting the raw material for it remains a challenge. Interviews with anyone, from butcher to boxer, from milkmaid to Prime Minister, still are supposed to be arranged only through frustrating and cumbersome official channels. Requests to the press department of the Foreign Ministry, the currently-designated 'channel', often seem to be filed and forgotten. Complaining about the number of unfulfilled supplications for interviews, sometimes up to 50 or 60, is a standard lament for a Moscow correspondent.

Since the early 1960s an alternative solution is to make the same application to the semi-official Soviet news agency 'Novosti'. At times 'Novosti' operates with commendable efficiency. But it charges roughly $50 a day (prices vary) for what amounts to a door-opening service leading to anything from opera stars and cosmonauts to junkets in Siberia or the Far North. 'Novosti' also balks at sensitive or unfavourable subjects, however.

Attempts to contact a source directly, be it an official or a ballerina, can result in reprimands, warnings and almost certainly even less co-operation in the future.

Most Moscow correspondents find the trick is to skate close to the line, following the rules for the most part, but occasionally trying a direct approach, if it looks like it might work without a scandal.

Even the most innocent forays afield can cause trouble, however. I remember being reprimanded once a few years ago for calling the Soviet airline, *Aeroflot*, to ask the year's passenger figures, and another time in late 1967 for inquiring—without official permission—how many housemaids had been found jobs by a Moscow employment centre.

DETOURED, DELAYED AND CLOSELY surveyed in his official contacts, given a meagre ration of facts amid a mind-shattering din of misinformation and high-pitched propaganda, the Moscow correspondent's success in doing his job depends in large measure on what that job is. If he works

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for a news agency or a daily newspaper that wants him to find out quickly just what Kosygin told Brezhnev at the last Politbureau meeting, how the hawks and doves split upon the Middle East decisions or how long Alexander Shelepin will hang on in the upper echelons of power, then he is doomed to constant frustration. Over a nine-year span of reporting from and about the USSR (from May 1959 to July 1963 for United Press International, and from August 1964 to 30 March 1968 for *Newsweek*) I rarely heard a reliable report on such matters. Rumours, yes. Facts, no. And sending 'reliable' information about what is happening in the Politbureau is the trademark of a bad or inexperienced Moscow correspondent.

For the correspondent who is not under day-to-day or minute-to-minute pressure the situation is different. For those who can report in a more leisurely context—a weekend piece, a magazine or feature article—there is ever-increasing opportunity, I believe, to write with considerable perspective.

Apart from 'hard' news, there is, after all, the just as important field of analysis. Readers need to know about moods and attitudes in the USSR, about the probable reasons and courses of action for the Kremlin. They need first-hand glimpses of the kind of men who run the Soviet Union and the problems they face. And they want to know about the country's basic social psychology, about attitudes on love and marriage, youth and education, work and recreation, capitalism and communism, Stalinism and destalinization.

All this is fertile and tillable soil for a Moscow journalist. If he is gregarious and can make friends with Russians he will have no difficulty filling his articles with pertinent observations and comments from live Ivan Ivanovs or Maria Kuznetsovas gathered in the course of his stay.

If a Moscow reporter has the interest he also can immerse himself in the Soviet cultural world, keep abreast of the trials and tribulations of the latest plays, movies and films, of whose book is being censored or whose music rewritten.

He does it in much the same way he would elsewhere—by making friends in intellectual or journalistic circles. And if official meetings still are under tight restriction, such informal personal contacts with Russians in all walks of life have become steadily more accepted, more open and more fruitful.

Usually they will provide him with mood and perspective more than facts. Only rarely can he expect to use them successfully to cover events on a fast-breaking basis, the way he could by telephone in another country. Almost no substantive news gathered in Moscow is done on the phone. If it is not tapped it is assumed to be. Conversations are stilted or simply mechanical, to set up a time and place for a personal encounter. The real talking is done at diplomatic receptions or private dinners, in theatre foyers and restaurants, or during long alcoholic evenings in wooded country *dachas*.

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I remember estimating, during my UPI tour in Moscow, that a correspondent got something like 75 per cent of his news from the press, about 15 per cent from eyewitness experience and 10 per cent or less from 'sources'. For *Newsweek* I would imagine at least 80 per cent came equally from eyewitness experience and 'sources' or friends. Only a small portion came directly from the press. It all depends on what type of reporting is required.

SINCE THE FALL OF Nikita Khrushchev the Moscow beat has become calmer. The new 'collective' leaders frequent the cocktail circuit less, and when they do they answer questions in a monotone, not flamboyant phrases.

The post-Khrushchevian propaganda apparatus also has become more 'businesslike', more nine to five-ish. Government statements or headline-laden Khrushchev texts used to blurt out unexpectedly at all hours of the day and night over Soviet radio and television during my early Moscow days. Now they are much more likely to appear strictly during Ministry business hours. TASS, which had only a Russian-language wire when I first arrived, now puts out an English service that adheres more and more closely to Western news forms.

This is not at all a claim that the Kremlin beat is just like any other. It remains today much more like a detective assignment, in which one rarely if ever has the chance to interview the prime suspect. Cases or stories usually have to be built up painstakingly from third- and fourth-hand sources of widely varying reliability, and unfortunately, in Moscow, the detective often still becomes the accused.

Even without prior censorship every Moscow reporter knows that what he writes will be scrutinized by the Foreign Ministry and the appropriate section of the Central Committee. If it annoys the wrong people he can expect retaliation. He will be left off an invitation list. His requests for interviews will be ignored with more diligence than usual. His permission to travel may be curtailed even further and he may be attacked in the Soviet press or called to the Ministry for a reprimand or a warning. As a consequence, self-censorship still plays a role, which varies with the correspondent and the organization.

Certain subjects—anti-semitism and the treatment of Soviet Jews, questions of racism and African students, or Soviet minorities—are well-known invitations to trouble. And since the upsurgence of dissident unrest in recent months, the Foreign Ministry has implied that sanctions up to expulsion may be taken if correspondents are too active in contacting malcontents or reporting their protests.

The warnings have not choked off the protests. But Moscow reporters now think long and seriously about whom they meet and what they file on the dissident front.

From harassment to expulsion is a big step, however, Usually a correspondent today who adheres to the same rules of accuracy and sourcing that he would follow elsewhere can be reasonably sure he

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will not be kicked out. The glaring exception is copy that is personally offensive to one of the Soviet leaders or heroes such as Lenin. The operative word is 'personally'. One can, for instance, question the motives or veracity of a leader's public statements. But it would be folly for a correspondent to hint at complicity in past blood purges or irregular personal behaviour unless he were at least prepared to pack his bags in 48 hours.

Given the obstacle course he must run, what then can the man in Moscow do better and, conversely, not as well as the specialist abroad? In a nutshell, the man abroad may have more and sometimes better information. The man on the spot has better feel.

The specialist in London, for instance, may be aware, as his Moscow counterpart is not—that at the height of the Middle East crisis Soviet warships are passing through the Dardanelles en route to the Mediterranean, or that Washington has just received a hot-line communication from the Kremlin. He may know that while *Pravda* was issuing another routine tirade against American aggression in Vietnam, delicate approaches to the North Vietnamese were being made in secluded foreign capitals. He may compare speedily what the Soviets are saying officially in Moscow with what their representatives in New York or Geneva are saying in the corridors of the UN. And he may be able to make sense of *Pravda's* mystifying editorial about China if he has read—as the Moscow correspondent probably has not yet been able to do—the latest thunderbolt from the *People's Daily* to which *Pravda* is replying.

The Moscow man, on the contrary, still works somewhat in a closet. Soviet radio, television and newspapers cannot be relied upon to keep him informed of what is going on in the outside world. His Western newspapers drift in by mail two days late. If reception is good he can pick up the foreign news bulletins of the BBC, Voice of America or other stations. Periodically he can go and peek at the most up-to-date window on the West, the incoming teletype wires located in the offices of the four main news agencies in town—Associated Press, United Press International, Reuter and Agence France Presse.

But still, I think, most Moscow correspondents often have the feeling I did—that they are operating frequently in the dark, reacting or expected to react to events or statements abroad of which they have only sparse details.

On the other hand the Moscow reporter has access to something else available only on the spot—a sort of tingle, an electricity in the air, a Kremlin pulse reading that works mostly by osmosis but is very real.

It quickly convinced me and, I believe, most Moscow reporters during the Cuban missile crisis that the Russians would turn away from final confrontation. Partly it stemmed from familiarity with Soviet policy in general. Partly it came from our isolation from the shrill headlines and sometimes deliberate tension-building across the ocean.

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In Moscow we could see that Soviet propaganda media were portraying everything in terms of a Cuban-American, not a Soviet-American confrontation. While the world was tense Moscow remained unbelievably calm. It was simply not, by the feel of it, a capital preparing for war.

Obviously a tingle was no guarantee, but it was an important part of the overall picture that only the Moscow men could supply.

The Arab-Israeli war in June 1967 is another case in point. Once again a Moscow correspondent could discern what Kremlin watchers abroad could not—that there was a vast difference between the official, strident anti-Israeli propaganda and the prevailing public sentiment. Most Soviet citizens with whom correspondents in Moscow talked at the time expressed outspoken admiration for the way the Israelis had cut down a much bigger opponent.

The same difference between pulse and propaganda prevails over Vietnam. An expert abroad could have read about Soviet protest meetings against the 'dirty war' in Vietnam. The man on the scene could go to them and hear people angrily asking why the USSR was involved. He also could talk with Soviets on all sides who usually expressed much more sorrow than anger at American Vietnam policy and sometimes even urged the USA to stay in the war to keep the Chinese out.

It is, in fact, in just this arena that the main value of a Moscow correspondent lies—as a brake or moderating force on the editors and analysts abroad who forget too easily the vast gap between what the Soviets say and what they think and do.

The contrast between life the way *Pravda* paints it and the way it is lived in the USSR is enormous and starkly evident to the man on the scene. And his opportunity to report on it grows with each passing year. As a foreigner a Moscow correspondent may never fully understand Soviet society. But he can add a dimension to the tableau that can only be made-in-USSR.

IN THE SHADOW OF 1947

Obozrevatel

'WHAT IS TRUTH?' asked Pilate. In December 1947, the Soviet Government provided at least part of the answer, when it passed a law laying down that all contacts between 'representatives of foreign institutions' (meaning embassies, commercial missions, and, by extension, Moscow-based foreign correspondents) and Soviet institutions or their employees must be channelled through the Soviet Foreign Ministry. There were, of course, exceptions, all solemnly set out under article 6 (let no one say the Soviet authorities lack a sense of humour!): thus, it was not necessary to inform the Foreign Ministry before going to the post office,

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to a restaurant or a cinema, before buying a newspaper or calling the fire brigade. But the general drift was clear. Whatever else it might be, the truth, in Soviet terms, was only that residue of a piece of information that remained after the Ministry had been at work on it with its fine filters, pasteurizing it, as it were, and rendering it fit for foreign consumption.

As far as correspondents are concerned, one need not, of course, go anything like as far back as 1947: after all, it was not until 1961 that open censorship of outgoing dispatches was abolished. If I have chosen to start with a consideration of the 1947 law, it is only because the Soviet authorities themselves chose to resurrect this risible scarecrow in January of this year, in the immediate aftermath of the trial of Alexander Ginsburg, Yuri Galanskov, Alexei Dobrovolsky and Vera Lashkova, when it was invoked to prevent correspondents meeting relatives of the accused. (Indeed, it seems that the pallid and aloof Mr Leonid Zamyatin, head of the Foreign Ministry press department, even condescended on this occasion to telephone the warning to some correspondents in person.) However, looking back—and my own retrospect as a correspondent in Moscow covers a period of roughly three years in the middle nineteen-sixties—one realizes that, in spite of an easing of official controls as part of Khrushchev's destalinization campaign, the 1947 law was not only never revoked, but was always kept lurking handily in the wings, to be produced if ever the Soviet authorities ran out of other arguments for side-tracking the efforts of an over-zealous foreign seeker after truth. Looking back, I am only surprised that they did not invoke it much sooner.

This is not to say that the Soviet authorities do not employ a considerable range of other, rather more subtle methods, by which they seek to control a foreign correspondent's activities, and the nature of the reports which he sends to the outside world on events and developments within the Soviet Union. Nor are these methods necessarily repressive: it is, after all, far more profitable for the Soviet authorities to operate by persuasion rather than prohibition. This consideration, at any rate, clearly underlies the pep talk which greets the newly-arrived foreign correspondent in Moscow making his first call at the Soviet Foreign Ministry, the burden of which is roughly as follows: 'We are happy to welcome you, and we are here to help you in any way we can. The only thing we ask in return is that, in reporting on Soviet life, you should be honestly objective in your approach. This will help to create a better understanding between our peoples, which is, after all, what we are all aiming at.' On the surface, this sounds an eminently reasonable argument, and the correspondent, after thus being formally initiated into his privileged new role, may even float through the first few months of his assignment in a state of mild euphoria—that is, until he stubs his toe on the harsh reality behind the superficial geniality of his welcome.

This painful experience may occur the first time he attempts to lift the dust covers off one of the more sensitive items in the Soviet

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repertory, such as the position of Jews in the Soviet Union—but not necessarily so. My own enlightenment began, for example, with what in any other country would surely have seemed the most harmless of requests. Not long after my arrival in Moscow, my office in London asked me to contact a well-known Soviet woman ballet critic, to see if she would be prepared to write an article giving the Soviet view of contemporary British ballet. By pure chance, I happened to learn that a few years earlier, this critic, Miss R——, had worked as a translator for one of the Western news agencies in Moscow, so it took me only a moment to ring the agency and get her telephone number. Shortly afterwards, I rang Miss R—— at home and explained my request, adding that the article was wanted in two weeks' time. At first, she sounded a little hesitant, saying she had a great deal of other work on hand; but then she warmed to the idea, and finally promised to meet the request in the appointed time. It was not until roughly a week later that I had the first intimation that things were not going to go so smoothly after all. This came in the form of a telephone call from Miss R——, who asked in tones of mingled agitation and embarrassment whether I had mentioned my proposal to the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. In some astonishment, I replied that, since we had been in personal contact, it had never occurred to me that this would be necessary. (This was not strictly true. I was aware that the Committee for Cultural Relations was one of the very few authorized channels for making contact with Russians: indeed, it was a sort of twin octopus to the Foreign Ministry press department, extending its tentacles into every aspect of a correspondent's professional activity. To be fair to the Committee, although it was not exactly nimble at getting off the mark, being no more geared for prompt action that any other Soviet government department, it did often do its best to meet a correspondent's requests. On this occasion, however, I had been congratulating myself—prematurely, as it turned out—that I would not need to resort to its good offices.) Unfortunately, Miss R—— was adamant. She was still quite prepared to write the article, but equally insistent that the request must first be approved by the Committee. With deep forebodings I took up the telephone again.

The official at the Committee listened patiently to my explanation, but would not commit himself. The Committee, he said, would look into the matter and let me know its decision. This was exactly what I was afraid of. But no amount of pleading about a rapidly approaching deadline would make him budge. The predictable happened. Over the following few days, I telephoned the Committee at regular intervals, each time, however, to be met with the same response: the Committee was still considering the matter. The deadline arrived, and I had to inform London that, because of the dilatoriness, not to say plain obstructionism, of Soviet officialdom, I had drawn a blank. *Three weeks later*, the official I had first contacted rang to say that Miss

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R—— could now meet my request. I gained a certain bitter-sweet satisfaction from telling him he was precisely three weeks too late; but such pleasures in the life of a Moscow correspondent are short-lived, since trying to dent the hard carapace of Soviet bureaucracy with a sardonic comment or an ironic reproach is about as much use as trying to penetrate a T-34 tank with a popgun.

The episode I have related was one of no great importance. But correspondents venturing on to more sensitive ground were, and are, in danger of bringing down specific warnings on their heads. It all leads back, of course, to what the Soviet authorities mean by 'objectivity', which in turn involves the relativity of truth, and the perennial argument about ends and means. In the last resort, a fact is an objective reality if the Communist Party of the Soviet Union says it is: otherwise, not. Any fact which fails to measure up to this august criterion is therefore more than likely to be regarded as 'tendentious', i.e. as relating to a reality which the Party either actively opposes, or would prefer to ignore. Moreover, although censorship of outgoing dispatches has been abolished, the Soviet authorities obviously continue to keep a watchful eye on a correspondent's output—perhaps more now, indeed, than ever before. Their methods of assessment are crude but effective, quantitative rather than qualitative. On the whole, what concerns them is whether a correspondent's approach to his task is *polozhitelno*—'positive'—which is good, or *otritsatelno*—'negative'— which is bad. Realizing, in short, that in the post-Stalin era they can no longer expect correspondents to limit themselves to a sustained paean of praise for Soviet achievements, the Soviet authorities behave rather like a philosophical grocer, weighing up the whole biscuits against the broken ones, and in this way arriving at a rough-and-ready profit and loss account. Needless to say, if a correspondent persists in dealing only in broken biscuits, it is not difficult to find an excuse for declaring him *persona non grata.*

FROM ALL THIS, coupled with other, more traditional forms of surveillance, such as telephone tapping and the opening of mail, it might seem that the sphere of action of the average foreign correspondent in Moscow would be hopelessly circumscribed. But, at least until the beginning of this year, when the authorities resurrected the bogey of the 1947 law, this was not in actual fact the case. If a correspondent kept his head and used a certain amount of discretion, it was always possible for him gradually to build up a number of highly valuable Russian contacts. Indeed, I would say that every Moscow correspondent, if he is any good, eventually builds up such a circle of contacts, of Russians who are prepared to advise him on one aspect or another of what is really happening behind the scenes. After that, of course, his real trouble begins, because he is then faced with a twofold problem, each side of which must be delicately balanced against the other: first, how to send the story out while protecting his original

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source of information, and second, how to keep his own lines of communication open (*anglice*: how to avoid expulsion). Inevitably, this calls for a nice sense of judgment, and it is not at all unusual for the second factor to outweigh the first, or in other words, for a correspondent to decide that he cannot possibly report all he knows.

Let me cite just one example from my own experience. Long before the furore over Kim Philby and his subterranean career as a Soviet spy burst upon a startled Western world, I learnt, in March 1966, from a Russian friend who was in fairly frequent contact with the little world of British defectors and expatriates in Moscow, that Philby had left his American wife, Eleanor, to live with the (also American) wife of Donald Maclean, Melinda. By any reckoning, this would have made instant headlines all round the larger world outside: but there was one fatal snag. If I had sent the story, the Soviet authorities would almost certainly have traced its origin; in which case, my source, apart from ceasing to exist as far as I was concerned, might well have been in considerable personal danger. At the time, it seemed to me that this risk had to be set well above the chagrin of forgoing a scoop. I admit that the argument can be turned round the other way: perhaps it depends which organization one works for.

In any case, risk-taking—as long as it involves nobody else's skin but one's own—ought to be part of the contract on becoming a Moscow correspondent, and I have nothing but admiration for several former colleagues who accepted such risks. In some cases, I think the risk they took had a positively beneficial result; and in more than one case, their reward for taking it was expulsion. In the first category, I am thinking of an American correspondent who courageously exposed the plight of one small group of Russians trying to get to the West: their history was a sad and complicated one; they had spent years in China before landing back in the Soviet Union, and their one desire was to join relatives in the West; and it is reasonably certain that it was only because the correspondent went to such pains to tell their story fully that the Soviet authorities finally granted them exit visas, rather than risk a rising public outcry in the Western press. In the second category, I am thinking of an equally courageous and hard-working British correspondent, whose crimes, in Soviet eyes, were twofold: first, that being the only reporter on the scene when it began, he accurately reported a demonstration by African students on Red Square which led to scuffles between them and the Soviet militia, the whole affair arising after an African was found dead in the snow by a railway line near Moscow, and his fellow students came to the conclusion he had been murdered; and second, that the correspondent in question had built up a series of useful contacts with students of various nationalities at Moscow's Lumumba University. For this exercise of normal journalistic enterprise, he was served with a five-day expulsion order, the Soviet authorities accusing him of deliberately

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trying to poison relations between the Soviet Union and a number of friendly African states!

I remember another occasion, however, which forms an ironic counterpart to this episode. It occurred after an *Izvestia* correspondent had been first arrested and imprisoned, then later expelled, by the government of General Mobutu in the former Belgian Congo. Western correspondents in Moscow were invited to a press conference, to hear their Soviet colleague relate the tale of his misfortunes, which, to be fair, he did with restraint and dignity, incidentally paying tribute to the correspondent in the Congo of the very same British news organization whose Moscow representative had been expelled from the Soviet Union in the circumstances outlined above, for help and moral support received during his period of incarceration in Leopoldville. There is a certain glorious inconsistency in the Soviet attitude to the newsgathering profession, without which a correspondent's life in Moscow would be dull indeed.

That, in my own experience, it rarely if ever is: although it can sometimes be mortally fatiguing, especially when one is dealing with one of the more familiar manifestations of Soviet paranoia (a mirror image, if ever there was one!), i.e. the mooted conviction that a foreign correspondent posted to Moscow must automatically be a member of MI 5 or 6, or at least of the CIA. This, of course, tends in turn to engender a reciprocal paranoia in the recipient of Soviet suspicions. In his gloomier moments, a foreign correspondent in Moscow is likely to wonder why the Soviet Union ever bothered to take a foreign press corps to its bosom in the first place, and to conclude that it did so for the same reasons that underdeveloped countries insist on having their own airline or their own steel industry, more for show than for utility. Considering all this, it seems to me that the Soviet Union gets as good a press as it can expect, and often better than it deserves. Looking back on my own experience: most correspondents in Moscow leant over backwards trying to report the more positive, encouraging, and optimistic aspects of Soviet life—even if only because these genuinely did exist, and had tended to be obscured in the consciousness of the outside world by the murderous imprint left by Stalin. I wonder if the Soviet authorities realize how much they stand to lose if they start fencing in such sympathetic observers with a Stalinist law passed more than twenty years ago.

UNDER KOSYGIN AND BREZHNEV

Pietro Sormani

OF THE DIFFICULTY of reporting from Russia one can say what was once said of the Arabian phoenix: everybody knows that it exists, but when it comes to defining it nobody knows where to start.

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The thought is still common, among people abroad, that everything that a correspondent sends out of the Soviet Union is censored. This is no longer true. Since 1961, every journalist has been able to send what he likes, by telephone, cable, mail or telex, assuming he can get one. (I have been trying for more than a year, without any success.) This is what puzzles many educated foreigners. 'Does this mean that you are free to say what you really think?' is a question that I was asked many times in Italy. In theory yes; in practice the matter is more complicated. There can be technical hitches on the telephone as soon as you start saying something critical about the country or the regime, but, though annoying, this is not the main form of pressure that is put on a foreign correspondent.

Everything that we send abroad is recorded—of that I have a great deal of proof. A colleague working for a Western radio and television network told me that he had once seen his own file, in a special cabinet, with all stories recorded on tape. Apart from this, everything that is published is read, cut out and commented on. Generally, this task is performed by the Soviet Embassy in the country where the stories are published, assisted, in the case of Italy and of many other countries, by the local communists. A report is then sent out to the Foreign Ministry in Moscow.

Sometimes this can lead to the Soviet authorities taking some form of disciplinary action: from expulsion in the most serious cases, to a dressing-down from the Foreign Ministry or public criticism in a newspaper. But these measures, especially the first, are very rare now and are only taken after many warnings and then mostly for something that the paper has written at home. The most recent example is that of the correspondent of the *Washington Post* who was expelled when his editor refused to stop the serialization of the 'Penkovsky Papers'. It is many years now since an Italian correspondent, a Jew, was called in *Izvestia* 'a Nazi', and 'a swine'.

Other forms of 'punishment' are more common. A correspondent may suddenly find that he is no longer invited to public functions and press conferences, or that he is unable to obtain a permit to go outside the 40 kilometres' limit which still exists around Moscow; and he may be subjected to all kinds of petty reprisals and threats. Another colleague of mine, in the last months of his stay in the Soviet Union, used to be called on the telephone every night, at three or four o'clock, and insulted by somebody speaking perfect Italian. At first he was angry at this behaviour, but when the nightly calls suddenly stopped he felt rather abandoned.

There are other, more subtle ways of getting rid of an undesirable journalist, although it is impossible to obtain positive proof of them. As soon as a foreign correspondent arrives in Moscow, he is carefully vetted by the authorities. He was certainly vetted *before* coming to Moscow—which explains why sometimes it takes so long to get a visa—but there are some personal characteristics which can be discovered only after

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a long and careful examination on the spot. Does the correspondent like women and drinking? Is he excessively fond of money? Is he ambitious?

For a reply to all these questions a new correspondent is observed closely in the first weeks after his arrival in Moscow. He may be followed to restaurants and cafés; he will receive some telephone calls from young ladies who, under various pretexts, try to meet him; and of course he will be watched closely by the maid and the interpreter who are sent to every foreign correspondent and diplomat by a special state organization (the all-powerful UPDK) and apparently are required to report regularly to their employers. Soon a complete outline of the character of the correspondent and of his weaknesses is drawn. The authorities know with whom they are dealing and what action to take if they want to get rid of him. It has happened in the past, though rarely in the last few years, that a correspondent has been involved in some sort of scandal, after which he was expelled from the country.

In my own case I must say that I was not subjected to any particular threat or pressure. I received my share of telephone calls, and many people offered to change dollars, to buy old suits or to sell ikons; once somebody asked me to help him go abroad. My newspaper, which is usually classified as 'the the most bourgeois newspaper in Italy' (unless it says something which is in line with Soviet propaganda, in which case it becomes the 'influential *Corriere della Sera*'), is often criticized and I was personally attacked on the Soviet radio for my reports on the Republic of Turkmenistan. Many times I was discriminated against: I was not allowed to visit such towns as Novosibirsk and Togliatti—even though Fiat is building a big car factory there—and I was seldom able to interview economists, physicists or writers. But on the whole I do not think that I was treated particularly badly.

I must say that I never wrote anything especially hostile about the country; on the other hand, I did not mince my words when I thought the occasion demanded, as in the case of the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel and the more recent one of Ginsburg and three other intellectuals. I found, in nearly three years of working in Moscow, that I could write almost anything, as long as it was not couched in strong anti-Soviet terms and I was sure of the facts on which I based my judgment. These, in my opinion, are the two most important requisites, if you want to keep on reasonably good terms with the Soviet authorities. Of course, they can and they will still object to your stories, as they did to mine, saying that they 'do not help foster good relations between Italy and the Soviet Union'; but if you are sure of your facts and if you use moderate language they will not take strong measures against you.

I do not believe, contrary to the opinion of many of my colleagues, that there are any forbidden subjects for a foreign journalist working in Moscow. Many people insist that it is impossible to discuss conflict in the party leadership, the low standard of living of the population, or immorality. This I did not find. It is true that an Italian journalist

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who wrote an article about prostitutes in Moscow was refused a visa when he wanted to return to the Soviet Union; and another, who wrote about a struggle behind the scenes in the Kremlin, was threatened with the closing of his permanent office in Moscow. But these were special cases and I have the impression that the Russian authorities resented not so much the subject matter of the articles as the manner in which they were written. The only exception, perhaps, is the private life of the Soviet leaders, which is always surrounded by the utmost mystery.

THE PROBLEM FOR A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT in Moscow is not so much reporting as collecting information. This is the real difficulty. The main sources of information are Soviet newspapers and magazines, official communiqués and press conferences, the news bulletins put out by TASS (in English and in French), the meetings and interviews organized by the Foreign Ministry and, until it was dissolved a few months ago, by the so-called Cultural Committee. Recently, the 'Novosti' news agency has assumed more importance. Being a business enterprise, it is willing to supply different kinds of stories and photos and to arrange interviews, on the condition they are paid for in dollars.

All this of course is not enough. There are many kinds of information which cannot be found in the official press. That is why it is essential for a foreign correspondent to keep in touch with all possible sources of information which are not official: foreign embassies, other foreign correspondents, especially communist, and private Russian citizens. This last source can be the most rewarding, but also the most delicate and dangerous, because you can never trust its reliability: it has been discovered in the past that a story coming from one of these sources has been planted by the authorities. On the other hand, if the informants are genuine, the authorities do not like them, as was shown recently when, following an invitation to a press conference by Ginsburg's mother, foreign correspondents were warned that it was illegal to get in touch directly with private citizens and that all requests of this kind should be addressed to the Foreign Ministry.

One of the most useful sources are the communist correspondents. Here the Italians enjoy a special relationship, which allowed them in the past to be the first to report the secret speech of Khrushchev at the Twentieth Party Congress and the attack made by Suslov on Khrushchev in October 1964. For an American correspondent to be on friendly terms with a communist would seem rather odd; for an Italian, accustomed to a big communist party at home and therefore to meeting communists every day and in all walks of life, it is quite natural. Communist correspondents do not of course tell everything they know—and sometimes it is a lot—to a colleague from their own country who, however, represents another newspaper. All the same an exchange of views, and once in a while of news, is always possible.

The presence of a large communist party at home puts the Italian journalist in a special position. He knows that everything he writes will

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have an influence on his readers: he must be more careful than his American or British colleagues, knowing that every mistake will be noted and used against him by his political opponents. At the same time, this knowledge tends to make him more aware of the importance of his work. For an Italian journalist there appears to be no news from the Soviet Union—only judgments. If I write that a kilo of tomatoes at the central market costs (out of season) 8 rubles or more, this, for my non-communist readers, is further proof of the failure of the socialist system; but for my communist readers—and there are quite a few—it is a slander against the Soviet Union.

This special position is reflected in our relations with the Soviet authorities. The Italian journalists are divided into two groups: *tovarishch* and *gospodin*, communist and non-communist. The communist correspondents enjoy many privileges: they live in Russian houses, meet Russian people, and are informed of what is going on; but at the same time they have more obligations. The non-communist correspondents live in complete isolation; they know less but they can report more. After all, the authorities expect them to be critical of the regime. Sometimes the authorities object to our dispatches, but more often than not they prefer to say nothing, to avoid provoking a reaction in Italy. If they do decide to intervene, they leave it to *Unita*, the communist organ in Italy, rather than use their own channels. I was often criticized by *Unita*, but seldom by a Soviet newspaper.

But it is not only the presence of a big communist party at home which influences, sometimes involuntarily, the attitude of an Italian correspondent in Moscow. There are also other important considerations: industrial and commercial relations, as exemplified by the deals with Fiat and Pirelli; tourist relations, often sponsored by the Italian Communist Party; and exchanges of technicians, scientists, and experts. There are also political considerations, especially those pertaining to Italian foreign policy. All these factors make an Italian correspondent particularly wary of the consequences of his work.

For my part I do not believe that I was subjected to much pressure. I received no favours from the Soviet authorities but I did not have to yield to them either. Of course, it very much depends on the newspaper one is working for, but on the whole I am sure that one can do a good, honest job, even in the Soviet Union, and that one is relatively free to say what one really thinks. You may not get a scoop—nobody will phone you from the Foreign Ministry or from *Izvestia* to tell you about an imminent change in the leadership; but then I do not personally care much about scoops.

The Soviet Union is a difficult country for a journalist to work in. The obstacles are far greater than in other countries; for that reason, one should try to minimize them by choosing a correspondent who knows the language and the problems, or by giving him time to study them. In my opinion, three years is the minimum length of time to spend in the Soviet Union, but a longer period is preferable. There will always

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be things, especially outside Moscow, which a foreign journalist will never know about, but perhaps their number will diminish with the passing of time.

TV: PICTURES FROM MOSCOW

Ulrich Schiller

WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS reporting from Moscow are limited not only in their way of getting information but also in their freedom to speak about it. The Soviet authorities gave up censorship, but every correspondent is responsible for what he says or writes. This works as a kind of ever-present menace, the menace of being expelled, a prospect which is not cherished either by the correspondent or by his paper.

Cancelling censorship did not mean a substantial improvement in the situation, and since the fall of Khrushchev, it has even got worse again. Many things are kept secret for old-fashioned tactical or security reasons (departure time of leading personalities, Party conferences, modern industrial plants), others—because the Party does not want to see them publicized (the literary trials, hardship areas, internal Party affairs). We can move 40 km. around Moscow, but even within that limit there are closed districts too. To move outside Moscow we need special permits and if we want to stay somewhere overnight, we need a special stamp in our passport, which takes at least four days to get. About what is happening outside Moscow we learn either through official Soviet sources, by accident, or never. Students' unrest in the Ukraine? A trial in Leningrad? Earthquake in Tashkent? We depend on official information given in the guided and censored press or on a chance report which cannot be checked.

The press section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is of little help to us in providing information, especially when it is 'hot', when we need it most. There are no regular press conferences, except in reply to somebody else's press conference in the Chinese or British Embassy. The press section helps us in organizing the technical conditions of work; it is the only authority we can apply to for contacts with other state and municipal institutions, for interviews, etc. On the other hand, it intervened sharply when correspondents were asked by Mrs Ginsburg, the mother of one of the young intellectuals now in jail, to come to her press conference.

Because of all that, to be informed means to read as many papers and periodicals as possible. Editorials have to be analysed from the first to the last word because new formulations are indicating new official views on various matters. One must have a good memory of how things were presented before, and a good knowledge of Party history, because only in its light will many subjects and tendencies become clear.

There is one information medium towards which the Soviet

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authorities changed their mind in recent years: television. Previously they were afraid of every picture taken out of the country, now they realize the power of pictures. At present, the idea is that pictures shall go out testifying in favour of the Soviet Union. It is a most delicate task for a TV correspondent to use this readiness, not just to carry Soviet propaganda, but to preserve his objectivity, while retaining the co-operation of the television section of the APN agency, which provides facilities for foreign correspondents (on a hard-currency basis). It must be said that the agency does its best to compromise between its own instructions and our demands. The greatest problems for foreign reporters are in fields outside the competence of APN. The largest part of Soviet territory is closed to reporters, the authorities allow us to shoot only what they want to be shown. Many things cannot be shown: one may write about literary trials or about pressure on intellectuals, but one cannot film anything on this subject. This is just one example among many others. It is difficult to make clear to the TV viewer in another country that what he sees is indeed part of the truth about this country, the Soviet Union, but that it is not the whole truth. A film on Soviet medicine, for instance, certainly has to show a lot of great successes and improvements, but it would be a mistake to infer that efforts seen on the screen represent in any way the quality of the average health service. TV reporting from the Soviet Union is different from that in other countries in all kinds of ways. Judging it in Western terms must lead to wrong conclusions about political affairs, as well as about daily life.

'DEAR EDITOR'

Alexander Werth and the Story of a Correspondence

Leopold Labedz

IT ALL STARTED with the fiftieth anniversary of the Soviet revolution. On 29 September 1967, the *New Statesman* published a special article on the subject by Alexander Werth containing some rather unexpected admissions by this 'distinguished British correspondent in Moscow'. Two weeks later the *New Statesman* published my letter to the editor, contrasting some of the critical remarks of Mr Werth in this article about the situation in Russia in the earlier jubilee years—1937 and 1947—with his descriptions at the time. In particular I recalled a discussion about the book by David J. Dallin and Boris Nicolaevsky on Soviet forced labour camps in the correspondence columns of the *New Statesman* in 1948, a discussion in which Mr Werth minimized the number of prisoners and testified that the slave labourers he personally met were 'sturdy specimens of humanity'.

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In his reply Mr Werth admitted that he was 'pulling punches' about Soviet slave labour. He justified it on the grounds that in so doing he was trying to prevent an atomic attack on Moscow. Here is the text of the exchange:

Sir, As a faithful reader of Alexander Werth for 30 years, I have been struck by his consistently idiosyncratic method of dealing with the Soviet past and present. Writing about the Soviet anniversary year, 1967 (NS, 29 September), he remarks that 'as for the earlier Jubilees, it is better not to think about them: 1947 was a year of acute famine in Russia; and 1937, the year of the greatest mass-arrests and mass-deportations at the height of the Yezhov-Stalin terror, continues to be a byword of horror, fear and insecurity, when no one could be sure that he would not be arrested, deported or shot within a few days.' Mr Werth adds that 'only during very few of the 50 years of the Soviet regime was life at all reasonably tolerable . . . during very few of those 50 years did the Russian people have enough to eat.'

Such explicit statements, stripped of apologetics, tend to be retrospective in Mr Werth's writings; criticism, now so boldly applied to Stalin or Krushchev, has been hardly noticeable when they were ruling Russia. Not only at the present anniversary, but at any given time, one usually gets from Mr Werth the impression that, but for the few incidental blemishes in the past, the Russians have never 'had it so good'. It is only when a ruler is gone that Mr Werth's apologetic tone becomes miraculously transformed into critical spirit. Then, and only then, the previous leader's failings or misdeeds are ruthlessly exposed. (There are, however, exceptions to this rule. On some occasions, when discussing Soviet affairs, Mr Werth still prefers not to display any such critical spirit about the Soviet past. In a recent interview which he gave to *Pravda* [15 August 1967], he did not say anything about it, limiting himself to the eulogies of present Soviet achievements.) In his book, *Moscow '41* (1942), Mr Werth justified the 1937–38 purges because, although they 'involved thousands of probably innocent people', the purged old Bolsheviks would 'have undermined or delayed the growth of Russia's military strength' and 'Tukhachevsky was going to sell out to Hitler'. It was, said Mr Werth, 'a case of smashing opposition in the midst of an extremely dangerous international situation'. And he added that anyway the purge 'was, clearly, less the work of Stalin than of Yezhov and his gang' (p.50). This, of course, was written when Stalin was in power.

In his present article Mr Werth informs us that the immediate post-war years were marked by 'a new wave of the Stalinist terror'. Yet, although he spent those years in Russia, he somehow failed at the time to bring this fact to the attention of his readers in the West. Moreover, it was in that very period that Mr Werth published in the NEW STATESMAN (19 June 1948) a lengthy extenuation of the Stalinist forced labour camps. In this letter he once again explained away the 1937–38 purges, stating authoritatively that it 'did not run into millions' and that, anyway, it affected only the bureaucracy, the political activists, some intellectuals, and part of the officer corps. As to the number of inmates of Stalin's forced labour camps, Mr Werth contemptuously refuted the figure of 8 to 12 million prisoners estimated by Dallin and

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Nicolaevsky, an estimate which he presented incorrectly in his letter as being of the order of 12 to 15 million. He declared condescendingly that the number of 'convicts' 'might conceivably amount' to 1½ or 2 million. When Krushchev lifted the veil from the subject, Mr Werth returned to it again in his book, *The Krushchev Phase* (1961), in which (p.44) he referred to his 1948 letter to the NEW STATESMAN about the Soviet forced labour. Only now he tried to avoid the impression that he was belittling its extent and asserted that the figure he had given in that letter as his estimate was 'between 3 and 4 million'. In fact, as can be seen, this was double that which he actually gave in the first instance. In a similar fashion he misrepresented the estimates of his opponents, alleging now that they had talked about '20, 30 or even more million slaves' and thus making their estimates appear still more inflated. (Mr Werth evidently has some difficulty in handling figures; in his recent article he stated that 'China has nearly *five* times the population of the Soviet Union.')

One can quote many instances of Mr Werth's remarkable hindsight. He applied it not only to Stalin's era, but also to Krushchev. Here is a typical example. In the same jubilee article, Mr Werth states, in a matter-of-fact way, that Krushchev 'was notoriously anti-semitic'. This is an extraordinary revelation by the 'distinguished British correspondent in Moscow', who only a few years before declared in *The Krushchev Phase* (p.157) that 'the stories about Krushchev's anti-semitism sound, to say the least, rather apocryphal'. But, of course, this was written when Krushchev was in power. Concluding his October Jubilee article, Mr Werth exclaims: 'Soviet Russia should be a very remarkable country indeed when it celebrates its 60th birthday!' One looks forward to Mr Werth's article on that occasion. He will then no doubt fearlessly reveal some of the facts, at present unmentionable, about the Soviet Russia of 1967.

LEOPOLD LABEDZ

ALEXANDER WERTH *writes*: (1) It is not true that I always said that 'the Russians never had it so good'. In *The Year of Stalingrad*, published in 1946, i.e. during Stalin's lifetime, I speak of the privations, hardships and loss of life the Russian people suffered during the war.

(2) Mr Labedz then says that 'it is only when the ruler is gone that Mr Werth's apologetic tone becomes miraculously transformed into critical spirit'. Like *The Year of Stalingrad*, I also published during Stalin's lifetime *Musical Uproar in Moscow*, in which I said all there was to say about the abominable purge in literature, music and the arts generally carried out by Zhdanov, Stalin's right-hand man. Remarkable that, with all his profound study of all my writings, Mr Labedz should somehow have overlooked these two books.

(3) The *Pravda* 'interview' last August lasted, in reality, about half-an-hour but *Pravda*, quite rightly no doubt, boiled it all down to a few lines of harmless generalities.

(4) I am now told that I 'justified the purges of 1937–38' in *Moscow '41*. This book was written at the height of the war, with the Russians fighting with their backs to the wall at Moscow and Leningrad. It must have been painful for Mr Labedz to admit that, even then, I wrote that 'the purges involved thousands of probably innocent people'. This is

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a good deal more than almost anybody else in Britain would have ventured to say then.

(5) I don't know where Mr Labedz was in 1941–42; but if he was in Britain at the time he must surely remember that people were acutely conscious of the fact that their very existence depended on whether the Russians (under Stalin) held out or not. They were completely starry-eyed about Stalin and the Red Army. That, shortly before the war, 'Stalin had a good case for smashing opposition in the midst of an extremely dangerous international situation' seemed obvious enough at the time, though even then, as I readily admitted, 'thousands of probably innocent people' had also been destroyed in the process.

(6) As for Tukhachevsky, did Mr Labedz know *at the time* the real facts of the case, any more than I did? If President Benes of Czechoslovakia fell into the Gestapo trap, why should less-informed people like Mr Labedz and myself not have fallen into it? As for the story that the purges were less the fault of Stalin than of 'Yezhov and his gang', this was a story persistently circulated in Russia between 1938 and 1941. Mr Joseph Davies, the US Ambassador in Moscow, fell for it; not only that: he wrote a book, *Mission to Moscow*, in which he justified the purge trials, which is infinitely more than I ever did.

(7) I was virtually expelled from the Soviet Union in May 1948, after my attacks on Zhdanov and an earlier article in the *Manchester Guardian* in which I had spoken of the near-famine conditions caused in Russia by the drought of 1946. But even so, on returning to Britain, I did 'minimise' the number of 'slave labourers' in camps, by saying that there were probably 'only' 2 million of them, though even this was bad enough. But how many actually were there? Does Mr Labedz know? If so, he might tell us. My estimate was lower than most, I admit. But there was a very good reason for this. In 1948 the Cold War was at its height, and there were no end of people in Britain and especially in the US who were advocating a preventive war against Russia; and the 'slave labour' (the more the better) was their pet argument. It was the 'hawks' of those days who spoke of 8–30 million 'slave labourers' whom it was the Free World's sacred duty to liberate. I remember some distinguished Conservative ex-ministers in London saying quite openly what Churchill was implying in his Llandudno speech of 1948: 'Drop the atom bomb on Moscow before it's too late.' Yes, I had every reason to pull my punches about 'slave labour' because *that* was the Number One argument of all the preventive-war people. And I don't regret it.

(8) It is quite true that in 1959 I did say that 'the Russians never had it so good'; it was a plain statement of fact. Krushchev was then at the height of his popularity, and the Virgin Lands had, indeed, proved a success—though only a short-lived success, as it later turned out. As for Krushchev's anti-semitism, this is a very small matter; I underrated it in 1959; since then there has been enough to show (e.g. Krushchev's and his propaganda chief Ilychev's attacks on Ehrenburg in 1963) that he was more anti-semitic than he appeared to be in 1959.

Mr Labedz apparently expects me not to be an intelligent human being who learns from experience, and thus revises some of his opinions from time to time, but a fossil who is never allowed to change his mind about anything, in 10 or even 30 years!

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I have taken up Mr Werth's points in a letter sent to the editor of the *New Statesman* on 16 October 1967. I stressed the implications for the ethos of journalism of Mr Werth's revelation that he was not just ill-informed or biased, but instead of reporting facts as he knew them, he has consciously engaged in pro-Soviet propaganda. I concluded that 'as a reporter he damns himself out of his own mouth by his self-admitted readiness to distort facts for political reasons'. I asked:

> It would be interesting to know what the editors of the journals of which he was a correspondent in Moscow, including the *Manchester Guardian* (as it then was) which has for so many years taken pride in the principle of C. P. Scott that 'opinions are free, but facts are sacred', think about it.

My letter was not published, but the *New Statesman* of 20 October 1967 carried another letter (by Mr Robert D. Kempner) which made a similar point. In his reply (27 October 1967) Mr Werth excused himself once again by saying that he 'stretched points' about the Soviet slave camps in view of what he considered as an impending danger of a nuclear strike against Moscow, and maintained that he was right in doing so.

THIS WAS THE END of the correspondence in the columns of the *New Statesman* on the subject. My subsequent letter (of 30 October 1967) was also not published. I wrote in it that Mr Werth was engaged in myth-making and that he was presenting a false dichotomy:

> Preventive nuclear war was never contemplated by any government in the West; paradoxically, only Lord Russell advocated such a course. On a more serious level it was always only a question of deterrence, whatever Soviet propaganda may say.

It is of course entirely up to the editor of a magazine to publish a letter or not. On this occasion the readers of the *New Statesman* were spared the thought that 'the business of a foreign correspondent is to report facts and not send political propaganda'.

This is how the matter ended. Mr Werth had the last word and I forgot about the affair. However, some time later I was jolted by two surprising occurrences, as a result of which I wrote the following letter to the editor of the *New Statesman* on 18 January 1968.

> Dear Sir,
>
> May I call your attention to an extraordinary item recently published in the Soviet press which is relevant to an article by Mr Alexander Werth in your issue of 29 September 1967 and the ensuing debate in your correspondence column.
>
> Mr Werth, you will remember, then confessed (*New Statesman* 13 and 27 October 1967) to having 'minimized' the number of the slave labourers in Stalin's concentration camps. He said that he 'pulled punches' and 'stretched points' about them for political reasons.
>
> If I am reverting now to what another participant in this debate, Mr Robert D. Kempner, referred to as a betrayal by Mr

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Werth ' of his integrity as a journalist ' (*New Statesman* 20 October 1967) it is because Mr Werth's original article, in which he described among other things his conversation with the Soviet writer, Valentin Kataev, has now received an interesting comment from rather unexpected sources.

On 10 January 1968, the Soviet *Literary Gazette* published an article entitled ' The Belated Repentance of Alexander Werth ' which quoted a letter, sent to the editor by Valentin Kataev, referring to Mr Werth's *New Statesman* article: ' After its publication in the British and French press, I received a letter from Werth with all kinds of excuses, which included the following paragraph: " In order to explain better the point of view of the avant-garde writers, i.e. of the real writers, I (and this was the worst stupidity on my part) resorted to a (somewhat doubtful) journalistic trick, attributing to you many things which you did not say, but which I have heard from many other, particularly the young, writers. . . . That I have summarized all this in a half-' invented ' conversation with you, was terribly wrong of me." ' ' Comment '— concludes Kataev—' is quite superfluous '.

Now, if Mr Werth's letter (translated here from Russian) is not genuine, we will, I imagine, be hearing shortly of his protest and denial. If, however, what Kataev says is true, surely Mr Werth owes an apology not only to Mr Kataev, but also to yourself and your readers.

Perhaps at the same time he may clarify his position on the 1967 Soviet edition of his book *Russia at War*, for which he wrote a special preface. In his introduction the editor, General E. A. Boltin, stated: ' The Russian edition of this book was prepared in collaboration with the author, who endorsed it fully, introduced a series of corrections and improvements, and, in essence, re-wrote the first part of the book '.

As it happened, the ' corrections and improvements ' consist of changes and omissions in line with current Soviet writing of history, of all passages and chapters on such embarrassing topics as the Soviet-Nazi Pact, the seizure of the Baltic States, Katyn, etc. Mr Werth's comment on Soviet allegations about him will not be superfluous.

Yours faithfully, etc.

One week later, on 25 January, Mr Paul Johnson, the editor of the *New Statesman*, telephoned me and explained that Mr Werth, without informing him about it, sent the letter quoted by me to Mr Kataev, in order to give him a chance to get himself off the hook. Mr Johnson told me that Mr Werth claimed that his original report in the *New Statesman*, attributing various statements to Kataev, was genuine and that his private letter to him, quoted by the Moscow *Literary Gazette*, in which he says that they were not (or only half-invented), was a charitable lie. Mr Johnson said that the publication of my letter in the *New Statesman* may, according to Mr Werth, cause trouble for Mr Kataev from the Soviet authorities, because if it is published, Mr Werth

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will have to reveal the truth. Mr Johnson thought therefore that it would be inappropriate to publish it as it may jeopardize Mr Kataev's position. When I pointed out to him that this reasoning certainly does not apply to the second part of the letter, he agreed to publish it if I sent it to him in a modified form, without mentioning the Kataev affair.

On the very same day I sent Mr Johnson a communication in which I again expressed my astonishment at what he told me on the telephone. I said that I was a little bit dizzy on this carousel of revolving explanations by both Mr Kataev and Mr Werth, that I did not know which of them told the truth, but that on one assumption Mr Kataev was acting dishonourably in using Mr Werth's letter by gunning down his friend in the columns of the *Literary Gazette* as a liar, and on another assumption, that the letter was a genuine apology for attributing to Kataev opinions he never voiced, Mr Werth still stood condemned.

I emphasized that by suppressing the information about the affair and withholding it from the readers of the *New Statesman* its editor would in effect condone the attack in the *Literary Gazette* on 'the lies' printed in his magazine. I also pointed out that to conceal the truth about this affair on the excuse that it may be harmful to an eminent senior like Valentin Kataev would not be helpful to all those young Soviet writers who are fighting for the right to tell simple truth and are ready to face prison and labour camps by openly taking a public stand. The contrast between their actions and those of Messrs Kataev and Werth speaks for itself.

I did not see any danger for Kataev in the situation and I thought that it was 'a matter of over-protection misapplied', but I concluded the letter by saying that 'as I do not want to feel responsible for anything that might conceivably happen' I therefore 'propose to drop the matter and not deal with it in public. In doing so I am acting against my better judgment.' I enclosed the shortened version of my letter, hoping that its 200 words on the two editions of Mr Werth's book would be published, as Mr Johnson said it would be in his telephone conversation with me.

After some delay I received from Mr Johnson a letter (dated 9 February 1968) in which he said:

> I have now heard from Mr Werth about the points you raise in your letter concerning the Soviet edition of his book *Russia at War*. The matter is infinitely more complicated than you may have realized. You make a generalized charge against Mr Werth which can only be refuted in detail; his reply, I calculate, would take up more than two whole columns of our space, and as the matter to which you refer does not arise from material published in the *New Statesman* I am not willing to devote this amount of space to it.

Mr Johnson suggested that I should get in touch directly with Mr Werth, and ask him for an explanation. This seemed to me pointless. I had by then read a relevant reply by Mr Werth to an inquiry by the

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author of an article comparing the British and Soviet editions of his book (Mr H. L. Verhaar, in the Dutch magazine *Internationale Spectator*, no. 2, 22 January 1968, published by the University of Amsterdam). In answer to the specific questions raised by Mr Verhaar and concerned (as was my own letter to the *New Statesman* of 16 January 1968) with the discrepancies between the two editions of his book, Mr Werth wrote:

> Have a little patience. I am relating the circumstances in which the Russian edition of my *Russia at War* was published in *Russia at Peace*, the Penguin which will be published in two or three months from now. Meantime you can write what you like, and correct your conclusions afterwards, if necessary.

In the circumstances there was obviously no point in repeating the performance of Mr Verhaar. Anyway, Mr Werth had by then in his hands the texts of my letters which Mr Johnson had passed on to him. If he wished, he could have replied. Judging by his answer to Mr Verhaar, he was not too anxious to provide explanations, private or public.

MR WERTH'S BOOK HAS been translated into many languages and has been sympathetically reviewed. *Corriere della Sera* (22 April 1966) described it as 'a work which is destined to last', written by 'an honest historian', and other reviews in the 'bourgeois' press (the *New York Times*, *The Observer*, *Die Zeit*, etc.) were on the whole also quite positive. Yet, interestingly enough, the Soviet 'liberal' *Novy Mir* (no. 3, 1968) was distinctly dissatisfied with Mr Werth. It could not, of course, mention the omissions in the Soviet text—this would not be allowed by the censor—but it did criticize Werth for 'a different treatment of material in the introductions to the Soviet and American editions'. This, the reviewer pointedly said, 'causes some surprise', and he went on to castigate Werth for trying 'to justify the acts of Stalin, the erroneousness of which has been conclusively proved in Soviet historical and Party literature'.

Bernard Levin was more explicit in the *Daily Mail* (10 April 1968). He referred to 'an act of literary self-emasculation that must be almost unique', and ironically listed the following 'insignificant details', omitted from the Soviet edition of Mr Werth's book:

> All mention of the secret protocol to the Nazi-Soviet pact; the chapter on the partition of Poland between Hitler and Stalin; all unfavourable comments on the Soviet seizure of the Baltic States; the chapter on Stalin and the Church; all discussion of Soviet responsibility for the Katyn massacre; all criticism of the Soviet authorities in the reference to the 16 Polish resistance leaders arrested by treachery; the official Soviet condolences to Hitler after the unsuccessful attempt on his life in 1939; the reference to the extermination, in 1949, of the leaders of the defence of Leningrad during the war; the reference to the NKVD units whose

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> purpose during the war was the machine-gunning of Russian soldiers engaged in unauthorised withdrawal.

Mr Levin concluded: 'I look forward to his [Werth's] discussion in the 1980s, of the deliberate falsification of his own book'. Fortunately, our cliff-hanging need not continue as long as that. An inquiry to the Penguin publishers revealed that *Russia at Peace* (which will presumably contain Mr Werth's explanation) is to be published in 1969.

In view of all this, and of other additional elements of public interest in this affair, I no longer had any doubts that it would be right, proper, and useful to publish a summary of the case. A word about other relevant developments.

In Moscow, the reactionary editor of the *Literary Gazette*, Alexander Chakovsky, wrote a vicious attack on the young rebel writers in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (27 January 1968). He reminded them triumphantly that 'Valentin Kataev has publicly unmasked the dishonourable act of Alexander Werth'. In Hungary, the co-editor of the literary magazine *Kortars*, E. P. Feher, brought the matter to the attention of the Hungarian public in an article 'The Ginsburg Case and the Troubles of Soviet Literature', published in *Elet es Irodalom* (27 January 1968).

> Kataev favoured his old friend Alexander Werth—the correspondent of the *New Statesman*—with an interview. (Alexander Werth, until now known as a correct British newsman, who has always stuck to the facts, was the Moscow correspondent of the BBC during and after the war, and his interview with Stalin—also published in Moscow—created a sensation.) Werth—as he admitted in his letter to Kataev later—put words into the Soviet writer's mouth which he never said and which could seriously compromise him in his country.

The article dealt with the Ginsburg-Galanskov trial and Soviet underground literature.

Shortly thereafter, there was also an article on the same subject in the *Times Literary Supplement* (8 February 1968). It was even less sympathetic to the rebellious young writers. Its anonymous author was referred to as 'A Special Correspondent'. He wrote condescendingly about '*only* some two hundred people [who] assembled outside the court' where Ginsburg and Galanskov were tried. Robert Conquest commented on this in the *Times Literary Supplement* (22 February 1968):

> Did it not require a certain determination? Not simply that the temperature was –25°C, but that they were, at considerable risk, displaying their faces and identities for the KGB. After all, this is more than your correspondent has done for the readers of the TLS.

Mr Conquest also objected to some remarks in the article opposing outside analysts of Soviet affairs to foreign correspondents in Moscow.

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He pointed out that some of them on their own admission bore false witness:

> Even Mr Alexander Werth has recently told us that in reporting on the labour camps he 'pulled his punches' for political reasons (see the correspondence columns of the *New Statesman*, 13 October 1967). Now in what conceivable sense is the carefully documented information about the camp system provided by those outside experts Messrs David J. Dallin and Boris Nicolaevsky in their *Forced Labour in Soviet Russia*, published at that time, misleading? It has been confirmed, often in considerable detail, by Soviet sources of the Khrushchev period. Are we seriously to assume that Mr Werth's negatives were superior reporting?

When Mr Conquest wrote his letter he obviously did not know who the 'Special Corespondent' of the *Times Literary Supplement* was. But his identity was soon to be discovered. The Russian *émigré* publication *Posev* (no. 5, 1968), which made available to the anonymous 'Special Correspondent' of the *Times Literary Supplement* the texts of the Soviet underground literary writings which were the subject of his article, revealed that it was none other than Mr Alexander Werth.

In Stalin's time Mr Werth was pulling punches. In Khrushchev's—stretching points. Now under Brezhnev, Werth is obviously the soul of discretion. What price a 'Moscow Correspondent'? It may be sometimes difficult for editors to assess; and sometimes they may find it even more difficult to reveal.

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SOLZHENITSYN'S 'CANCER WARD'

Daniel Weissbort

NO doubt there will be much controversy over whether the cancer ward, as such, is a symbol for Russia. Clearly, Russia, in the author's view, has been and is suffering—though with some signs of recovery now—from a serious degenerative disease, affecting above all its central nervous system. Nevertheless, I do not feel Solzhenitsyn's choice of subject has been principally dictated by this consideration. The novel works on several levels. In the first place it is a chilling and unusually detailed study of cancer itself and the ways in which people of different kinds react to it, obviously based on first-hand experience. At a slightly deeper level, it is an examination of different people's attitude to death; cancer, the cancer ward, is the unifying factor and enables the interaction of diverse people in the same predicament to be followed in detail; at this level it is a test of philosophies as well as people. Like Tolstoy, in *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, Solzhenitsyn uses mortal disease in his book to clear away the protective devices Man interposes between himself and reality; the imminence of death eliminates everything inessential, reveals people for what they are, strengthening some and destroying others.

Solzhenitsyn's psychological insight is truly Tolstoyan in its penetration. Generally, his portrayal of character, his superb observation of the external signs of inner conflict is reminiscent of Tolstoy's technique: he strips off the layers of self-deceit with surgical accuracy. This is realism of the highest order. The effect is entirely natural, uncontrived. As with Tolstoy—and as in life—we see the characters first from the outside. Before nature, before man, Solzhenitsyn has the humility of the artist; he describes *exactly* what he sees, and what he sees is a true representation of nature and, at the same time, wholly his own vision. The many characters in the novel, then, are, without exception, fully credible, while being loaded symbolically. If there is any didacticism or tendentiousness, it lies in the plot itself, not that one can help sympathizing with the direction of Solzhenitsyn's thoughts, nor that the same cannot be said of many great Russian novels. Tendentiousness is, after all, almost an inherent characteristic of the 19th-century Russian tradition, in which Solzhenitsyn very definitely finds himself.

I feel that it is precisely the depth of Solzhenitsyn's realism that marks him off from practically all contemporary Soviet writers. He has, indeed, fully taken over the tradition of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. It is surely this scouring of the human being, this incredibly detailed exploration of his complexity that distinguishes 19th-century Russian literature, rather than the specific attacks on a corrupt and repressive state order—and the same holds good for Solzhenitsyn. The diseased and tyrannical state is something to fight in each instance, but that which is fought for remains the same. We are able to identify with Solzhenitsyn's characters because they are so completely alive; we are able to believe in the episodes he describes because they are so

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realistically constructed, so full of those irrelevancies and haphazard details that are the stuff of life. Solzhenitsyn needs no psychological theory to analyse human beings; in fact, he does not analyse on the basis of theory, but on the basis of observation—and that is his strength.

Though there is a hint of late Tolstoy in the author's overt concern for establishing a true philosophy of life—and this concern is understandable in one who spent so much time cut off from society—no facile solutions are arrived at in the novel. The Tolstoyan idea of the natural man, living a simple and moral life, runs through the book, but it is handled tentatively and is not—at least at this stage (Part 1)*—erected into a final and total solution. Indeed, the main character, Kostoglotov, a former political prisoner, though by instinct he is the very type of natural man, insists on the need to doubt everything (quoting or misquoting Descartes in support of this belief). For him there is one thing more important than life itself, and that is Man's freedom to choose his own destiny, and finally his own death. He finds himself in direct conflict with the doctors, who, for the most part, are honest and sincere practitioners of their art, but who also have not faced the ultimate truth, which, in their case, is that there is one thing more important than saving life. Kostoglotov insists that the price of life may be too high, that no one has a right to make the ultimate decision for anyone else.

WHILE the novel is set very definitely in a Soviet context—specifically the year 1955, just before the 20th Party Congress and Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech', a time therefore of expectations, hopes, and fears—the critique of society that is contained in it has more general relevance. Basically, Solzhenitsyn stands firm, with his main character Kostoglotov, on the sanctity of the individual, on his right to dispose of his own affairs as he sees fit. He subjects materialist society to a detailed criticism and in so doing demolishes both the communist materialist utopia and the Western version of it. Solzhenitsyn's attack on the Soviet philistine applies as well to the Western philistine. It constitutes a powerful restatement of basic truths, truths that can so easily be ignored or taken for granted; the extreme immediate context of the action—the cancer ward and the desperate physical condition of most of the characters—lends weight to a seemingly simplistic philosophy. It is interesting to note that this philosophy connects up with naturopathic beliefs, as it so often does in the West, too, though somehow in Solzhenitsyn these hypotheses do not appear eccentric. Kostoglotov does not really believe in medical intervention and both the radium therapist and surgeon in the novel express doubts in the effectiveness of their treatment; there is much made, for example, of the long-term and hitherto unsuspected ill-effects of deep-ray treatment. From Kostoglotov's viewpoint, medical intervention is an aspect of interference with the individual, an expression of the materialistic, mechanistic outlook. He stands for a more organic view of Man and believes that in a closer identification of man and nature lies the key to correct living. Whether one is convinced or not—and Kostoglotov

* Anonimo, *Rakovyi Korpus*, Part I, Il Saggiatore, Milan, 1968; Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Rakovyi Korpus*, The Bodley Head Ltd., London, 1968.

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puts the case very persuasively—the fact that the author takes his criticism of authoritarianism so far as to criticize even the 'benevolent' medics again marks him off from his contemporaries. It shows him as a man of thoroughly independent views. It is as though Solzhenitsyn had been sensitized by his internment to such an extent that he must register the remotest, the faintest threats to the individual, and it is this which gives his work much wider significance than that of most of his fellow Soviet writers.

Not the least interesting feature of the novel, however, is the insight it does allow into specifically Stalinist conditions. Solzhenitsyn, the observer, is at his best in his examination of the effects of Stalinist repression on the reflexes, as it were, of individuals and society. 1955 is a time when people are still trying to understand the change of course after Stalin's death and the 20th Party Congress has not yet set the seal on destalinization. Society is in a critical state, facing both ways at the same time. Some, like Kostoglotov, are hoping it will entirely turn its back on the immediate past; others, like Rusanov (the old Stalinist), are appalled at how far the process has already gone, with the public elimination of Beria, that symbol of police repression, the sacking of the monolithic Supreme Court, and finally the resignation of Malenkov as Chairman of the Council of Ministers, which, though it was a matter of politics rather than philosophies at the top, showed how unpredictable the situation had suddenly become. So while inside the ward men are facing death and having to come to terms with it and with themselves, outside, society is also in a critical state and slowly, creakingly moving towards a new solution.

THE novel is written in the form of a series of portraits of different individuals and their different views on life. It examines their interrelationship and tests, as it were, the effect of one hypothesis on another. Each important character is seen through his own eyes, through the eyes of the others and in depth—that is, taking into account the most significant aspects of his background and personal history. Two sets of poles are set up. First, there is Kostoglotov and Rusanov. Rusanov, who closely resembles Tolstoy's Ivan Ilyich, is a self-important, talentless public servant; his self-deception knows no bounds and he lives entirely by external standards; he is one of those many proletarians who were utterly corrupted by the unwonted power the communist regime suddenly placed in their hands. The personal case history that Solzhenitsyn sketches with Rusanov is extremely suggestive; he describes with great vividness his fearfulness, his sheer physical cowardice and horror of pain. This cowardice extends into the sphere of morality. Rusanov deceives himself into believing he is a moral man; he is prudish and respectful of authority, but in his behaviour he is almost totally amoral. He rises to prominence in the 'cadre' sections by denouncing 'enemies of the people' in the name of the people (*narod*), but he himself fears the population (*naselenie*) more and more. He fears its rudeness and roughness, its potential violence, and cuts himself off progressively from it (as Stalin did). He becomes, in fact, a kind of paranoiac. The population he experiences as a direct, personal, physical threat—an actual blow in the face—and his

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reaction is vengefully sadistic. Just as he cannot face people, nor acknowledge his fear, so he cannot face his illness. He tries to hide from it, but it effectively cuts him off from society, from the busy important life that gave him identity. The description of fear in the person of Rusanov is, I think, a superb achievement. Kostoglotov, on the other hand, is the questioning, self-reliant individualist. Just as Rusanov has no understanding of the sanctity of the individual, sees everything in terms of the stereotyped official Party dogma, so Kostoglotov defends the individual even from genuinely benevolent encroachments.

Two other poles are represented by Vadim Zadyrko, a young creative intellectual, and Yefrem Poduyev, an uneducated materialistic roisterer who, in the final stages of his illness, becomes converted to the Tolstoyan philosophy of moral regeneration through love for others and acceptance of death as a natural process. Poduyev is a simple man of the people who has always enjoyed excellent health and never given a thought to death. He is totally unequipped, therefore, for dealing with the calamitous situation in which he now finds himself. When finally he is convinced of the gravity of his illness, he reacts by trying to undermine everyone else's faith; he becomes a total pessimist. If he is to cease existing, then everything in the world must be rendered worthless. It is Kostoglotov who hands him a book of Tolstoy's moral tales, and suddenly the world begins to take on a meaning for Poduyev; he is able at last to begin accepting death, to see it as part of the natural scheme of things. He is also able now to see where he has gone wrong, to make sense of his past life. The new Poduyev keeps on asking people the purpose of life, but, in fact, it is himself he is asking this question, and within himself he is formulating an answer. Zadyrko, on the other hand, is a man who finds fulfilment in realizing his own creative potentialities. The purpose of life, for him, is to create. He has always been impatient of time, conscious of how little time there is. His cancer has resulted from the surgical removal of a birth-mark. So he has, as it were, carried his death upon him. There is something of a classical tragedy about Zadyrko's destiny. He is a proud, highly disciplined, in a way selfish individual. For him, life will be justified if he is allowed to bring his particular piece of creative research to a successful climax. He will go out in a blaze; those whom the gods love die young. He is temperamentally hostile to Poduyev's Tolstoyism, which he deplores as a surrender, as something passive. Solzhenitsyn draws no absolute balance between these two ways of handling life, but seems to suggest that for some one path is valid, and for others a different one.

THIS is by no means an easy or consoling book to read. It is impossible, in fact, to read it without being drawn into the situation. None of the characters are either black or white (not even Rusanov is wholly black!); identification takes place to an uncomfortable extent. The story itself it very bare, but there is a powerful impression of movement, as the characters are themselves in a state of continual spiritual turmoil. Within their superficially static world (as opposed to the world of Russia outside, being shaken by such big events), where all

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that happens is the gradual, usually fatal progression of the disease, they endure the most violent and dramatic changes in their mental states.

In outline—and omitting the rich interplay of character, the fugue as it were of personal case histories—the story line is as follows. The novel opens with Rusanov being admitted to hospital, accompanied by his wife and son. Once in the ward, forced into distasteful proximity with other men, he soon clashes with Kostoglotov, who senses what he is. Kostoglotov, it transpires, is one of the few patients actually responding positively to treatment, though he is, as we have seen, the most sceptical also. Having in addition missed out, as it were, on his adolescence, and having spent the last 10 years or so in a remote prison camp and exile, he finds himself attracted to the two young women in whose direct charge he finds himself, the spinster and virgin Dr Vera Gangart, and the nurse Zoya. Dr Gangart it is who initially admitted him to the hospital, but she, for some reason, has led him to believe that she is married. The younger Zoya, on the other hand, makes herself available, and indeed is seriously considering Kostoglotov, who is so much more interesting than the young men with whom she has had affairs. The women are somehow under the spell of the man's powerful spirit of independence, so that they infringe hospital rules with regard to him. They are both sincere, well-meaning people, and yet naïve about the harsh truths of the Stalinist world. Kostoglotov enlightens them.

He is responding to ray treatment, but the head of the department, Dr Dontsova, decides that hormone therapy is now needed. She does not argue with him, and deceives him into accepting this form of therapy which will result in the destruction of his male sexual drives and potency. Here, the issue of what price should be paid for life and the individual's sole right to decide on this comes in. Later on, Zoya and Kostoglotov finally declare their mutual attraction and Zoya tells Kostoglotov of the effect of the hormone injections.

Kostoglotov delivers a kind of lecture to the ward in which he lays out the fruits of his highly individualistic reading and research into cancer. He points out the possibility of spontaneous recovery, the futility of much medical treatment, and finally describes a certain fungus used by some remote country doctor which, it is claimed, can cure or arrest tumours. Most of the patients react positively to this. Rusanov, for the first time, agrees with Kostoglotov and clutches at this straw. Yefrem, however, the Tolstoy convert, talks about the moral condition as perhaps being a factor in recovery. There is a flare-up between him and Rusanov, who accuses him of 'idealism', but Kostoglotov insists that the state of conscience may well be a conditioning factor.

Rusanov's wife visits him. She tells him she has heard of the 'rehabilitation' of certain people he has denounced. Rusanov is terribly shaken by the news. Though he had tried to keep his name out of the indictments—and was never required to face the accused—he is worried they may have learnt of his role. Rusanov is being overtaken by events. For example, he had named one of his children Lavrenty (after Beria!); 'the requirements of life change, but names remain forever'. All his fears of people, of the physical threat they

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pose, are activated. He feels unprotected. There is nowhere to turn. On the one hand, there is his tumour, on the other these 'rehabilitations'. 'In that wonderful, honest time, in 37 and 38, the public-spiritedness was noticeable, it was so easy to breathe!'. Rusanov has a nightmare that is a symptom of his mounting paranoia.

There is about to be a ward inspection by the head doctor. Dr Vera Gangart warns the men. She examines Kostoglotov's bedside table and finds a mysterious infusion. Kostoglotov tries at first to throw her off the scent, but finally admits it is some naturopathic remedy he has been taking all the time, and that maybe that is responsible for his improvement rather than the ray treatment. She insists they go out together and pour it away, and finally he concurs (he has a lot more!). He tries to prolong the interview—he is very attracted to her, but beyond telling him that they called her Vega at school (it was, in fact, her dead fiancé only who called her this), she does not respond to him. With Zoya he makes more progress.

Rusanov declines, begins to lose interest in public affairs, though he still cannot accept death in any positive spirit. Meanwhile Kostoglotov becomes more optimistic, though he learns of the effect of the injections from Zoya, who also feels it is better to chance not having them, particularly as she now has a personal interest in the matter. He remembers his liberation and thinks about his place of permanent exile, with love. Prison has taught him to be happy with very little, in fact to despise material wealth.

Finally, Rusanov, at a very low ebb, is visited by his beautiful and vigorous daughter, Avieta, the pride of the family. She is, if anything, worse than him, a complete opportunist and careerist. Her breezy presence contrasts with the tortured, questioning characters in the ward. She offers all the pat answers. She reinforces her sinking father in his obtuseness, but tells him that one must adapt to events, even destalinization. Her concern is totally with the externals of life, and her philosophy is that of official socialist realism. She describes how she is going to have a volume of poetry published, and tells of her manoeuvres to secure this. Her father is pathetically proud of her, but the old ex-Stalinist, ex-worker is also alarmed at the thought of having such a prominent daughter; he and his kind always worked in the dark. Demka, a naïve teenage patient who has been reading an article on sincerity (clearly V. Pomerantsev's 'On Sincerity in Literature', *Novy Mir*, December 1953), asks her her views on this and she gives the Party response. She understands nothing of what has been going on in the novel, of what is happening in Russia. She is a more sophisticated, more morally depraved version of her father. Her final words, by their sheer idiocy, throw the whole of what has gone before into sharp focus. 'Well, father, fight for health! Fight, get better, throw off the tumour—and don't worry about anything!—She emphasized this. Everything, everything, everything will be fine!'

WHILE, therefore, there can be no easy equation of the cancer ward with Russia, the novel does operate on a historical level too. Solzhenitsyn suggests that it is only through personal regeneration, a regeneration that can take many forms and that must be worked out

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within each individual, that the country itself may be restored to health. In the first place, then, the novel is humanistic. It is a study of Man and Society *in extremis*. It offers no easy solutions, but it is intensely positive. It is a truly serious work, a call to identify and face the serious issues of life, yet it is also full of humour. It draws overtly and in spirit on the Russian heritage. It is furiously specific and for that very reason universally valid. It is not a flawless novel artistically, but one must wait for the second part before trying to evaluate it as a whole. Nevertheless, it is clear that this is the work of a profound and sensitive writer who has reached full maturity.

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SOVIET UNION

We have published earlier in SURVEY (Nos. 64 and 67) two letters by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, in which he referred, among other things, to his difficulties in having his works published in Russia and complained that one of his novels 'has been "published" in a "closed" edition, to be read by a selected and unnamed few'. Since that time, the efforts to publish his novel The Cancer Ward *in* Novy Mir *were stopped, and the ban on publishing Solzhenitsyn in the Soviet Union continues. However, the first part of the novel has appeared in the West (see the preceding review), and the publication of the whole text is imminent. Copies of the book have reached many publishers and the publication of the English translation of the book has been announced. Excerpts from the book have been published in the Bratislava* Pravda *and in* The Times Literary Supplement. *On 18 April 1968 Solzhenitsyn sent another letter to the Writers' Union (the* New York Times, *1 May 1968), saying that the editor of* Novy Mir, *Alexander Tvardovsky, received a telegram from the Russian-language* émigré *journal,* Grani, *published in Frankfurt, informing him that the Soviet security police 'has sent to the West still another copy of* The Cancer Ward *with the aim of obstructing its publication in* Novy Mir'. *The editors of* Grani, *being in possession of a copy of* The Cancer Ward, *decided therefore 'to print this work immediately'. Solzhenitsyn, who repeatedly expressed his paramount concern about the possibility of the publication of* The Cancer Ward *in Russia, asked the Writers' Union to investigate the case, saying that 'this episode makes one think about the strange and obscure ways through which the manuscripts of Soviet writers can reach the West'* (Corriere della Sera, *30 April 1968). The inevitable competition between Western publishers is thus reinforced, the issues confused, and the public gets the impression of squalid wrangles which then rub off on the author and his book. However, it is not the publishers' fault, but that of the situation created by Soviet publishing practices and censorship, a situation which is then exploited in the competitive West for ulterior political motives by Soviet security services. In this particular case the number of Solzhenitsyn's manuscripts, not only those circulating in Moscow, but those which reached the West, is now*

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probably higher than 007 and the story of their handling would no doubt make a splendid Kriminal-roman.

Solzhenitsyn himself has sent a letter which appeared in the Italian communist newspaper, l'Unita *(4 June 1968):*

> *I have learned from a news story published in* Le Monde *of April 13 that fragments from my novel* The Cancer Ward *are being printed in various Western countries and that the publishers Mondadori (Italy) and The Bodley Head (England) are in litigation for the copyright of this novel. I declare that no foreign publisher has received a manuscript of this novel from me, nor any authorization to publish it. Therefore, I do not recognize as legal any publication of this novel, present or future, done without my authorization, and I do not grant that anyone else can hold the copyright. All distortions of the text, which are inevitable considering the number of copies involved and their uncontrolled distribution, are harmful to me; all arbitrary film and theatrical adaptations of the book are disapproved and prohibited by me. I already know from experience that* One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich *was spoiled by haste, in all the translations. The same fate evidently awaits* The Cancer Ward.

In response to this letter, the Literary Gazette (26 *June* 1968) *published a violent (anonymous) attack on Solzhenitsyn, accusing him of letting himself be used by 'bourgeois propaganda'. It said:*

> *'The writer Solzhenitsyn could give all his literary talents to the fatherland, instead of being malevolent towards it. He could, but he did not want to. This is the bitter truth.'*

The article gave a long list of all Solzhenitsyn's sins, and in particular castigated him for the publication of Cancer Ward *and* In the First Circle *in the West. The* Literary Gazette *printed Solzhenitsyn's letter, but omitted from it his reference to the 'harmful' effect of the publication of his works abroad. It accused him of not taking part in the activities of the Writers' Union and of letting himself be used by 'bourgeois' propaganda. These 'accusations' would be comic, if the situation were not so tragic.*

It is quite predictable that in the competitive and sensationalist West The Cancer Ward *one day will be made in Hollywood into a glorious Technicolor film, with a haunting tune added to it. Before that happens and the hullabaloo, as in the case of Pasternak's* Doctor Zhivago, *submerges the one relevant consideration—the evaluation of the artistic merits of the book—it is worth reflecting on the drama of the author, at present the greatest contemporary Russian writer, who is fighting for his artistic life, if not for his freedom, and who, while unable to control the circumstances of the publication of his book abroad, is concerned with its publication in Russia. That he is not the only one who realizes the importance of this at the present stage of Soviet literary development, when liberal hopes are fading in the face of a new cultural crackdown, is testified by the remarkable letter of Veniamin Kaverin on the subject of* The Cancer Ward *which we reproduce below.*

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AN OPEN LETTER TO KONSTANTIN FEDIN

We have known each other for 48 years, Konstantin. We were friends in our youth and we have the right to judge each other; this is more than a right, it is a duty. Your former friends have often wondered what were the reasons for your conduct during those never to be forgotten events of our literary life, which have steeled some people and transformed others into servile officials, far removed from genuine art.

Who does not remember, for instance, the tragic and obtuse story of Pasternak's novel, which has done such harm to our country? Your role in this affair was such that you were compelled to give the impression that you did not know about the death of a poet who had been your friend, and who had lived next door to you for 23 years. Perhaps you could not see from your window the crowd of a thousand people who accompanied him when he was being carried past your house!

How did it happen that you not only did not support, but trampled upon the *Literary Moscow* almanac which was so vital to our literature? After all, even on the eve of the meeting of 1,500 writers in the House of Film Actors, you were still supporting this publication. At the same time that you had in your pocket the written text of a speech of betrayal, you were praising our work, not finding in it even a shadow of political impropriety.

This is by no means all, but I am not going to make a balance sheet of your social activities in this letter. These are perfectly well known in literary circles. It was not for nothing that your name was received in complete silence on the occasion of Paustovsky's 75th birthday. I would not be surprised if now, when at your insistence Solzhenitsyn's novel *The Cancer Ward*, already set up in print in *Novy Mir*, has been prohibited, your first appearance before an audience of writers were met by cat-calls and stamping.

Of course, your position in literature should to a certain extent have prepared us for this striking occurrence. One would have to go very far into the past in order to find the first step which marked the beginning of your spiritual deformation, of the irreversible change. For years and years this change was taking place deep inside you, but it did not clash in any striking way with your position, which could, at times, be, if not justified, then at least explained by historical causes. But what has pushed you NOW to take this step, as a result of which our literature will suffer heavily again? Do you not understand that the very fact of the publication of *The Cancer Ward* would have eased the tension in our literature, would have undermined the unjustified lack of faith in it, and would have opened the road to other books which would have enriched our literature? The outstanding novel of Alexander Bek remains in manuscript; it was permitted at first, then prohibited, although it has been unreservedly acclaimed by the best writers in our country. It is the same with the war diaries of Konstantin Simonov. It would be difficult to find even one serious writer who does not have in his drawer a manuscript which he has conceived and produced, and which has been prohibited for inexplicable reasons, quite beyond the limits of good sense. Behind the facade of the alleged well-being, which

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is the theme of the declarations inspired by our leadership, grows a strong original literature, the spiritual wealth of our country, which at the moment is so necessary to her. Do you not see that great historical experience requires its [literary] embodiment, and that you are joining those who for reasons of self-interest are trying to stop this inevitable process?

But let us return to the novel of Solzhenitsyn. There is now no single editorial board, no single publishing house, where people do not say that Markov and Voronkov were FOR the publication of the novel and that the print has been broken up only because you have emphatically taken a position AGAINST it. This means that the novel will go on circulating from hand to hand in thousands of typed copies, and will be sold, they say, at high prices. This means that it will be published abroad. We will give away his work to the public of Italy, France, Britain, West Germany, i.e. the very thing against which Solzhenitsyn himself often and emphatically protested will happen.

It is possible that there are some people in the leadership of the Writers' Union who think that they will punish the writer by handing him over to foreign literature. They will punish him by bringing him world fame, which our opponents will use for political purposes. Or perhaps they hope that Solzhenitsyn 'will reform' and will begin to write differently? It is ridiculous to think thus about an artist who represents a rare example of a man who constantly brings home to us that our literary tradition is that of Chekhov and Tolstoy.

But this step also means something else. You are taking a responsibility upon yourself, not apparently realizing all its huge significance. A writer who puts a noose around the neck of another writer will be a figure who will remain in the history of literature quite independently of what he himself has written, but purely as a result of what the other has written. You are becoming, while perhaps not even suspecting it, a target of ill-will, of indignation, and of dissatisfaction in literary circles.

This can only be changed if you find enough strength and courage in yourself to go back on your decision.

You understand no doubt how difficult it was for me to write this letter to you. But I have no right to keep silent.

Veniamin Kaverin
25 January 1968

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